



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Kings Beach, CA

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STAFF REPORT: Lake Valley State Recreation Area (LVSRA) Classification Adjustment and General Plan Amendment and Washoe Meadows State Park (WMSP) Classification Adjustment, Upper Truckee River Restoration, and Golf Course Reconfiguration Final Environmental Impact Report/EIS and Preferred Alternative and Additional Environmental Analysis (PAAEA)

STAFF: Cyndie Walck, Engineering Geologist, Watershed Program Manager

SUBJECT: Informational Public Hearing on Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project

I. Background

The Upper Truckee River is the largest tributary to Lake Tahoe. The river flows through the California Department of Parks and Recreation Lake Valley State Recreation Area (LVSRA) and Washoe Meadows State Park (WMSP). This reach of the river has been impacted by channel straightening, gravel extraction, grazing, logging, floodplain filling, and the most recent development, the golf course construction on the previous floodplain. Golf course greens and fairways extend to the edge of the river, leaving no buffer zone between fertilizer application and the stream. Undersized bridges constrict flow and accelerate erosion. Channelization during the 1930's and modifications such as the undersized bridges have led to a change in the natural processes that originally formed the river channel and sustained the ecosystem in a relatively stable condition. The result is chronic erosion of the bed and banks of the river, and increased velocity of the stream, which leads to degradation of instream and riparian habitat, causing poor water quality, which in turn contributes to extensive sedimentation and clarity loss in Lake Tahoe. A 2003 study by the National Sedimentation Lab states: "The Upper Truckee River is the greatest contributor of suspended and fine-grained sediment in the Lake Tahoe Basin" and "sediment delivery from the Upper Truckee River could be significantly reduced by controlling stream bank erosion in the reaches adjacent to the Lake Tahoe Golf Course".

The golf course was constructed on previously impacted lands along the incised river in approximately 1960. State Parks acquired the property in 1985, and following public input at that time, retained the golf course and divided the property into two units: LVSRA and WMSP. Because the golf course occupies areas adjacent to the river that used to be part of the meander belt and floodplain of the river, restoration would require relocation or elimination of several holes. The Upper Truckee River restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project was proposed to evaluate alternatives to address this issue. The preferred alternative in the 2011 FEIR/FEIS called for geomorphic restoration of the river, new access trails, relocation of up to 9 holes of the golf course to the west of the river, and a land exchange between LVSRA and WMSP.

The director of the Department approved the project in concept, subject to the decision of the State Parks and Recreation Commission approving the general plan amendment and reclassification. At the January 2012 meeting of the State Park and Recreation Commission, a unanimous Commission approved the General Plan amendment and reclassification adjustment for LVSRA and WMSP. The project was approved with findings and a mitigation and monitoring plan.

A lawsuit challenging the adequacy of the EIR/EIS/EIS was filed in Alameda County Superior Court on February 29, 2012 (*Washoe Meadows Community v. Department of Parks and Recreation et al.*, Case No. RG12619137). The trial court issued its judgment on April 20, 2015. The trial court granted the petition on four grounds:

1. The draft EIR/EIS/EIS did not identify a stable proposed project because it set forth a range of alternatives without designating a preferred alternative.
2. The final EIR/EIS/EIS did not sufficiently explain why the preferred alternative was substantially the same as Alternative 2 in the draft EIR/EIS/EIS.
3. The vegetation mapping in the final EIR/EIS/EIS differed from that included in the draft EIR/EIS/EIS and required recirculation of the final EIR/EIS/EIS.
4. The mitigation measures listed in the final EIR/EIS/EIS for protecting identified cultural sites, as well as fens and other wetlands, improperly deferred mitigation by failing to set a performance.

Accordingly, State Parks recirculated revised portions of the EIR/EIS/EIS to remedy the deficiencies identified by the trial and appellate courts. State Parks has now designated this document the “draft Preferred Alternative 2B and Additional Environmental Analysis” (draft PAAEA), which is a variation of Alternative 2, and calls for relocation of fewer holes. The final environmental document thus will consist of the original 5 volumes of the DEIR and FEIR and the draft and final of the PAAEA. These total combined documents will be referred to as the FEIR2 throughout the rest of this document.

This meeting will be informational only. The Department will provide a status update regarding the draft PAAEA and FEIR2 and the Commission will hear public comment regarding the proposed project. The Commission will not make a decision at this

meeting, but will be asked to make a decision at a future meeting of the Commission regarding the revised classification adjustment and General Plan Amendment as presented in the PAAEA of the FEIR2, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

II. Introduction

Lake Valley State Recreation Area and Washoe Meadows State Park are adjoining State Park System units in the Lake Tahoe Basin (See Figure 2 on page 16 of this report). The two units occupy about 781 acres in the scenic valley of the Upper Truckee River, near the community of Meyers roughly 3.5 miles south of South Lake Tahoe, within El Dorado County (See Figure 1).

Lake Valley State Recreation Area's 173 acres include about 1.5 miles of the Upper Truckee River and the lower reach of Angora Creek. Its eastern boundary is U.S. Highway 50, the principal route traveled by visitors to South Lake Tahoe and the surrounding vacationlands. Lake Valley's major feature is the 18-hole regulation length Lake Tahoe Golf Course which average about 30,000 rounds per season. During snowy winter months, cross country skiers and snowshoers recreate here, and snowmobiles use a track on the golf course's driving range. The clubhouse hosts weddings, parties, and other events. Because the golf course has several holes that play across the river, the Upper Truckee is not open to other recreation uses.¹

Washoe Meadows State Park's 608 acres are west of Lake Valley State Recreation Area. The park includes about 2/3 mile of the Upper Truckee River. Angora Creek, a tributary of the river, flows through meadows that give the park its name before joining the river within Lake Valley State Recreation Area. Stands of lodgepole and Jeffrey pine fringe the park's meadows and uplands. During summer, anglers, kayakers, and swimmers enjoy this section of the Upper Truckee River. Hikers, bicyclists, joggers, and equestrians use old roads and trails in the park during summer, while skiers and snowshoers enjoy the park in the winter. Washoe Meadows State Park is undeveloped, with no signage, formal entrance, or facilities. There is no access from Highway 50. Access is minimal, and can only be reached from residential streets on the western side of the park.

These lands had a history of exploitive use before their addition to the State Park System. The forests were logged and a dairy occupied the meadows. In the early 1900's, the river was straightened to convey logs and, in an effort to increase hay production for the dairy, drainage "improvements" were made to reduce flooding and dry out the meadows. In the 1950s and early 1960s, several areas were mined for sand and gravel, creating large barren pits (Figure 3). The golf course was constructed between 1958 and 1962 in the already impacted meadow, and a series of bridges were installed to allow golfers to cross over the river. A dirt race track also operated in the meadows. Residential subdivision separated the lands from nearby U.S. Forest Service wildlands

¹ Estimates of sizes, lengths, or quantities at Lake Valley State Recreation Area and Washoe Meadows State Park are more finalized in the FEIR, but may vary slightly, such as in the Lake Valley State Recreation Area general plan, because of improved measurement technology and more detailed field surveys.

and sewer and power lines were extended through the property. The property was slated for development as Lake Valley Estates, which included a second golf course, condominiums, and homes until, after a period of litigation that took place during the formation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), the site was purchased by the Wildlife Conservation Board for \$5 million and transferred to California State Parks in 1985.

III. PREVIOUS 1987 COMMISSION ACTION

In 1987, the State Park and Recreation Commission classified and named the Lake Valley Estates property, dividing it into two units, Lake Valley State Recreation Area and Washoe Meadows State Park. The boundaries of the two units was decided by a drawing a buffer area around the existing golf course, not on resource values. To allow for continuing the operation of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course, the park unit was classified as a state recreation area (SRA) which was compatible with a golf course. This method of boundary line establishment resulted in the 1.5 mile reach of the Upper Truckee River alternating back and forth between Washoe Meadows State Park and Lake Valley SRA in disjointed segments. The remainder of the property was classified as a state park because it contained "areas with outstanding values of statewide significance and areas capable of being restored to such values."

The purpose of Lake Valley State Recreation Area is:

To make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the 18-hole golf course, and the scenic Upper Truckee River and its environs. The department shall balance the objectives of providing optimum recreational opportunities and maintaining the highest standards of environmental protection. In so doing, the department shall define and execute a program of management within the unit that shall perpetuate the unit's declared values, providing for golfing along with other compatible summer and winter recreation opportunities while restoring the natural character and ecological values of the upper Truckee River, protecting its water quality, and protecting and interpreting significant natural, cultural, and scientific values.

The purpose of Washoe Meadows State Park is:

To preserve and protect a wet meadow area associated with the Angora Creek and the Upper Truckee River at the southwestern side of the Lake Tahoe basin. The unit's associated forest areas sustain Jeffery pine and lodgepole pine. (An exceptionally large lodgepole pine was also recognized in the original 1988 statement of purpose. Since the time the unit was established, the tree fell as a result of natural processes.) The unit contains fourteen Native American occupancy sites and remnants of an historic dairy, and is contiguous to other public lands important for their open space values and recreational uses. California State Parks will preserve, protect, restore, interpret and manage the unit's natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources, features and values, making them available to the public for their educational, inspirational and recreational benefits.

The Commission adopted a general plan for Lake Valley State Recreation Area in 1988. The plan states that "...classification as state recreation areas recognizes the significance of the unit in perpetuating an existing quality public golfing opportunity..."

The Lake Valley SRA general plan also states that the major focus of resource management for the State Recreation Area will be the restoration, enhancement, and long-term protection of the Upper Truckee River, and calls for preparation of a river management plan to restore a more natural channel configuration, control unnatural bank erosion and to restore riparian habitat along the Upper Truckee River. The general plan also recommended that the existing 18-hole championship be continued. No general plan has been prepared for Washoe Meadows State Park.

IV. UPPER TRUCKEE RIVER RESTORATION & GOLF COURSE RECONFIGURATION

In the 1990s, California State Parks initiated studies to evaluate how to best restore the Upper Truckee River, as called for in the unit's general plan. The river, Lake Tahoe's largest tributary, drains a watershed of roughly 56 square miles. From its headwaters in wilderness along the Sierra Nevada crest, it flows north for ten miles before reaching Washoe Meadows State Park and Lake Valley State Recreation Area. The river continues through the units and flows five miles north to Lake Tahoe, discharging to the lake adjacent to the Tahoe Keys in South Lake Tahoe. A draft of a river management plan was initiated in 2000, but was never completed in favor of taking a more comprehensive approach to evaluating river restoration opportunities. A 2003 study by the National Sedimentation Lab states: "The Upper Truckee River is the greatest contributor of suspended and fine-grained sediment in the Lake Tahoe Basin" and "sediment delivery from the Upper Truckee River could be significantly reduced by controlling stream bank erosion in the reaches adjacent to the Lake Tahoe Golf Course." The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, in cooperation with the Upper Truckee River Watershed Advisory Group, identified the reach of the Upper Truckee through the park and SRA as the greatest opportunity for rehabilitation among all the river reaches in their *Upper Truckee River Upper Reach Environmental Assessment Report* (Swanson Hydrology and Geomorphology 2003) because public ownership by California State Parks presented an opportunity for full restoration of a large reach of the river.

This watershed evaluation identified the river through the park and SRA as one of the two worst contributors of sediment to the Upper Truckee that degrade the quality of Lake Tahoe's water (Swanson Hydrology + Geomorphology 2003 and River Run Consulting 2006). They reported that the river channel at the park and SRA was eroding, incising into the river bottom and eating into its banks, impairing habitat for trout and other aquatic life. Downcutting of the river was also lowering the water table that supports riverside willows and aspens, damaging their value for songbirds and other wildlife. Without a riparian buffer between the golf course and river, fertilizer and other pollutants could run off more easily, increasing threats to water quality. In addition, the river overflows less frequently onto its floodplain limiting deposition of fine sediment out of the Upper Truckee and recharge of aquifers that sustain the park's meadows. Instead, the sediment is suspended in the river and erosion from the bottom of the

stream and banks is carried down the river, smothering trout spawning gravels and flowing into Lake Tahoe, where it reduces water clarity.

To rectify these problems, State Parks is proposing to restore the reach of the Upper Truckee River within Lake Valley State SRA and Washoe Meadows SP (the “Project”) to reduce the contributions of fine sediment to the river and Lake Tahoe and to improve riparian habitat.

Because this is a project EIR, the Department is the lead agency for this EIR under CEQA. The project was clarified as the preferred alternative and further refined in the PAAEA. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (“TRPA”) is the lead agency under the TRPA Compact. The Commission is a responsible agency under CEQA, since approval is necessary from the Commission for reclassification and to amend the General Plan.

The Project’s primary purpose is to restore natural geomorphic and ecological processes along this reach of river, improve riparian habitat, and to reduce the river’s suspended sediment discharge to Lake Tahoe. Because the golf course occupies the former meander belt and floodplain of the river, some of the alternatives will require modification of the course. Four alternative approaches to implementing the proposed project were considered, along with the No Project/No Action Alternative. Two alternative approaches to the river were assessed: geomorphic restoration of the river and floodplain and stabilization of the river banks in place. Three alternative golf course reconfiguration concepts were considered: reduced play (9-hole or executive course), reconfigured 18-hole regulation, and no golf course. These were combined to make the five alternatives evaluated in the EIR/EIS/EIS which represent a reasonable range of alternatives:

Alternative 1: No Project /No Action

Alternative 2: River Ecosystem Restoration with Reconfigured 18-hole Regulation Golf Course

Alternative 3: River Ecosystem Restoration with Reduced-Play Golf Course

Alternative 4: River Stabilization with Existing 18-Hole Regulation Golf Course

Alternative 5: River Ecosystem Restoration/ Decommissioned Golf Course

Several other alternatives, including off-site relocation of the golf course were considered but eliminated from further consideration

Alternative 2 was initially identified as the proposed project but during the CEQA scoping process (NOP) the Washoe Meadows Community Group requested that the Project Description be changed to not identify a preferred alternative project, but to consider several alternatives, similar to the approach under the National Environmental Quality Act. State Parks complied with their request. Following the Draft EIR process

and consideration of public comments, Alternative 2 was selected, and a Final EIR prepared. State Parks was then challenged for the lack of a single stable project description by the Washoe Meadows Community Group.

A revised version of Alternative 2 that restored the river ecosystem but relocated fewer holes, the Preferred Alternative and Additional Environmental Analysis (PAAEA), Alternative 2B, was circulated in response to the lawsuit in June-July, 2018. The proposed project, Alternative 2B, proposes full river ecosystem restoration with a 137-acre reconfigured 18-hole regulation golf course, relocating up to 5 golf holes (instead of the 9 holes proposed in the original Alternative 2). The proposed project, preferred alternative 2B, a slight variation of Alternative 2 of the EIR/EIS/EIS, involves restoration of the Upper Truckee River and reconfiguration of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course away from the river to make room along the river corridor for restoration actions and a buffer between the golf course and the river. This would involve relocation of a portion of the golf course to less environmentally sensitive areas more distant from the river (See Figures 4 and 5 of this report and Exhibits A-2 and A-3 in the draft PAAEA). The Project would lengthen the river's channel by about 1,700 feet by reincorporating old river channels, still visible in the SRA and park, that were cut off in the 1940s and 50s. New channels would also be constructed to create a slower, more meandering river. The river's bed would be elevated about two feet on average throughout this reach using these old meanders in conjunction with grade control structures and new riffles placed in the river channel. To shade the new channel, willows, and other riparian vegetation will be planted and large woody debris will be placed along the banks, improving conditions for trout and other species. Rock or sheetpile will be installed where needed to protect nearby sewer lines. After the new channel is established, about a half mile of the current channel will be filled and restored and other areas would be excavated to reconnect about 30 acres of floodplain and meadow, nearly doubling riparian habitat within the park and SRA.

Restoration of the river, floodplain, and habitat requires reconfiguration of the existing 18-hole regulation golf course to allow room for the river. Up to five holes near the river would be removed and replaced by new holes that may extend west from the current course into areas that are currently within Washoe Meadows State Park. Implementing the proposed project would involve revising the park unit boundaries, essentially "shifting" or trading land between Lake Valley SRA and Washoe Meadows SP, and realigning the boundaries between the two park units to make the boundaries more consistent with the two units' management practices and resource values.

The boundaries of Lake Valley SRA would be adjusted to encompass the reconfigured golf course and the existing South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD) access road. The area evaluated for relocation of the golf course was selected to reduce the area of the golf course in the 100-year floodplain and SEZ while avoiding impacts on other sensitive resources. The Washoe Meadows SP boundary would be modified to include much of the restored (high value) river corridor (historic meander belt), while the Lake Valley SRA boundary would be modified to include the reconfigured golf course. Methodology used to modify the boundary focused on including the largest contiguous stretch of river possible in Washoe Meadows SP, rather than the original disjointed unit

boundary line. The land exchange would be approximately equal acreage, with Washoe Meadows SP gaining 2 acres and Lake Valley SRA losing 2 acres. Importantly, access will now be available from Highway 50 to Washoe Meadows State Park, along with parking.

Currently, in general, the northeastern two-thirds of the river in the study area is bounded by golf facilities and is in Lake Valley SRA, while the southwestern third is in Washoe Meadows SP. The revised park unit boundaries, shown in Figures 4 and 5, would place most of the river zone in Washoe Meadows SP. The only section of river remaining in Lake Valley SRA would be in the vicinity of the new golf cart bridge crossing. The area north of the river near Angora Creek and the area just south of the river where current hole 18 is located would be shifted from Lake Valley SRA to Washoe Meadows SP and would be restored meadow and riparian habitat. The area to which the reconfigured golf holes would be relocated on the west side of the river would become part of Lake Valley SRA.

V. CLASSIFICATION ADJUSTMENT AND GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

The Proposed Project, which includes relocation of the golf holes and restoration of the river, cannot occur without adjustment of the classification of property at the park and SRA and amendment of the Lake Valley State Recreation Area general plan. Development of new golf courses is not permitted in a state park, because Public Resources Code 5019.53, which describes the state park classification, provides in part:

Improvements that do not directly enhance the public's enjoyment of the natural, scenic, cultural, or ecological values of the resource, which are attractions in themselves, or which are otherwise available to the public within a reasonable distance outside the park, shall not be undertaken within state parks.

Golf is permitted in state recreation areas, on the other hand, because Public Resources Code Section 5019.56 provides, in part:

State recreation units consist of areas selected, developed, and operated to provide outdoor recreational opportunities... Improvements may be undertaken to provide for recreational activities, including, *but not limited to*, camping, picnicking, swimming, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, boating, waterskiing, diving, winter sports, fishing, and hunting (emphasis added).

About 52 acres of the park would be transferred to the SRA, including up to 34 acres that may be occupied by the relocated golf course's footprint. The proposal before the Commission would reclassify these lands as part of Lake Valley State Recreation Area.

At the same time, about 54 acres of river, riparian habitat, floodplain and meadow currently within the SRA that will be restored by the Project would be added to the state park, resulting in a net gain of 2 acres to the park. The majority of the Upper Truckee River and of Angora Creek would be transferred to Washoe Meadows State Park. This is proposed because Public Resources Code 5019.53 provides that:

State parks are to consist of areas of outstanding scenic or natural character, oftentimes also containing significant historical, archaeological, ecological, geological, or other similar values.

In addition, Section 5019.56's description of SRAs instructs that:

Areas containing ecological, geological, scenic, or cultural resources of significant value shall be preserved within state wildernesses, state reserves, state parks, or natural or cultural preserves, rather than in an SRA.

The new boundaries of the units after the reclassification are shown in the *General Plan Amendment for Lake Valley State Recreation Area and Washoe Meadows Classification Adjustment* (see also Figures 4 and 5 of this report). After adjustment in the two units' classification, Lake Valley SRA will include 171 acres, about 2 less than at present, and Washoe Meadows State Park will include 610 acres, about 2 more than at present.

The complete amendment of the Lake Valley SRA general plan is presented in Attachment A. It describes how reconfiguration of the golf course helps attain the SRA's purpose by continuing to provide golf recreation while protecting and restoring the Upper Truckee River and conserving the site's other natural and cultural resources. The boundary adjustment would support the defined purpose of both Lake Valley SRA and Washoe Meadows SP by shifting much of the river to within the boundary of the park and promoting restoration of the river.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

As part of the EIR/EIS/EIS for the Project and other studies noted above, outreach efforts have included public noticing, scoping meetings, recreation planning workshops, public tours of the study area, and public meetings and hearings during review of the draft EIR/EIS/EIS, as well as numerous other small group and individual outreach efforts throughout the life of the Project. A website (www.RestoreUpperTruckee.net) that provides information on the Project was also launched in 2006 and updated throughout the Project to keep interested parties informed. The initial definition of alternatives was supplemented as a result of the public scoping process and early public planning workshops, which demonstrates the importance of public input for California State Parks. Several public information documents were also distributed including two newsletters in 2007 and shorter news-notes in 2009 and 2010. A pamphlet was prepared for 2010 meetings and a door knob hanger was distributed to nearby residences in the summer of 2010. A project update newsletter was distributed in 2013 proposing a reduced relocation area. The website was revised in spring of 2018. A public tour was held on the site in July 2018.

In addition, California State Parks has ongoing consultation with representative from the Washoe tribe regarding protection of cultural resources.

The mailing list for the Project has grown to over 600 names, not including agencies, adjacent property owners and organizations. Over 700 comments were received on the EIR/EIS/EIS in 2011, and over 150 were received on the PAAEA in 2018.

VII. RELATIONSHIP OF COMMISSION ACTION ON THE CLASSIFICATION ADJUSTMENTS AND GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT to the SUBSEQUENT APPROVALS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Once the final DPAAEA/FEIR2, is completed, the Director makes a decision to approve the Project, conditionally upon approval of the Classification Adjustments and the General Plan Amendment by the Commission. Subsequent implementation of the Project is contingent on action by three agencies: California State Parks, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Once the Director approves and Commission acts, the TRPA will consider the adequacy of the environmental document and approval of the proposed Preferred Alternative. If TRPA approves the proposed Preferred Alternative, the Bureau of Reclamation will then consider the adequacy of the environmental document under NEPA and determine the need to issue a record of decision.

The golf course reconfiguration and river restoration aspects are linked, and although implementation may be phased over several years, both are necessary. Restoration of the river requires room where natural processes can be restored, including a buffer area to enhance the river's riparian corridor. To create the room needed for restoration, it is necessary to reconfigure the golf course by moving golf holes from the river corridor. Implementation for both river and golf course construction will also be linked, and funding will need to be acquired for both portions before construction begins.

VIII. ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The General Plan Amendment and classification adjustment best meets the intentions of the general plan by balancing ecological and geomorphic restoration of the river, maintaining the golf recreation, and improving recreation and access to Washoe Meadows SP.

A. Park Resources Are Protected

The reconfigured units and amended general plan provide full protection of the park and the SRA's significant resources. These resources, documented in the *Lake Country Estates Project Resource Summary* (1987) that supported the site's initial classification and the EIR, include:

Meadows – The wet meadows currently protected within Washoe Meadows State Park are generally unaffected by the reclassification. Protection of other wet meadows will increase as those bordering the Upper Truckee will be incorporated within the park's revised boundaries, consistent with the park's purpose. Of the 54 acres being transferred to the park, approximately 48 acres of this will be wet meadow and floodplain riparian areas, including where the golf course is removed and restored. Approximately 7 acres of mesic and dry meadow now within Washoe Meadows State

Park will be reclassified as part of the SRA. These mesic and dry meadows include previously disturbed sites and other areas that are less environmentally sensitive and more common in the area and vicinity of Lake Tahoe than the wet meadow areas being increased, improved, and protected within the park.

Ponderosa and Jeffrey pine forests – Over 94 percent of the pine forests in Washoe Meadows State Park will remain protected within the park and will not be affected by the Project. About 27 acres of second and third growth pine forests, roughly six percent of the site's pine forests, maybe altered when the golf course is constructed, and will be reclassified as part of the SRA. These forests include areas previously disturbed by logging, grazing, and sand and gravel quarries that do not hold the same ecological value as that would be restored along the river and those protected in the park. Relocated golf holes would be sited to minimize removal of trees, especially trees greater than 30 inches in diameter (DBH), by placing new holes in relatively open areas previously disturbed by logging and gravel mining to the maximum extent feasible. Tree removal that cannot be avoided will be mitigated through a tree removal and management plan (MM 3.5-6).

To compare habitats within the park units, State Parks used California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR), a state-of-the-art information system for California's wildlife, developed cooperatively by the University of California, Berkeley, and the California Department of Fish and Game. The CWHR habitat system uses the combination of plant species, size, and density to classify habitats. The results demonstrate that the pine forest and chaparral habitat where relocation of the golf course would occur are common and widespread, while the wet meadows and riparian areas that will be restored are scarcer and more critical to wildlife.

Upper Truckee River and its riparian habitats – Most of the Upper Truckee River, Angora Creek, and their associated riparian habitats will be restored and protected within the park. The Project will also restore the 1300 linear feet of river that will remain in the SRA where the golf course connects across the river. Restoration of the river will increase its value as a habitat for trout and other aquatic life and improve the quality of its water. The riparian habitats along the river and creek will be enlarged, improving habitat for songbirds and other wildlife, and will provide a buffer between these waterways and the reconfigured golf course, reducing risks that water running off the golf course may degrade the river. For example, the length of golf course within 50 feet or less of the river will be reduced by 80 percent, from the present 6,382 linear feet to 1300 feet (Figure 6). The golf course area in the sensitive stream environment zone will decrease 20 percent, from the present 128 acres to 102 acres. Restoration of the river would result in the river regaining important natural processes, such as occupying a wider meander belt and overflowing the adjacent floodplain more frequently, depositing sediment and recharging the groundwater.

In addition, the Project that the reclassification and general plan amendment make possible provides a more connected wildlife corridor along the Upper Truckee River by moving golf holes away from the river and improving connectivity to nearby wildlife habitats. Because neighborhoods east and west of the park separate its habitat from

nearby U.S. Forest Service lands, relocating golf holes on the west side of the river will not significantly fragment habitat or prevent wildlife travel along the river.

Cultural resources – Archaeological sites and several historic buildings within Washoe Meadows State Park were cited as the properties' principal cultural resources in the 1987 resource summary. State Parks resurveyed the park in 2004 and inventoried a total of 22 archaeological sites including historic buildings and other features. Eighteen of these archaeological sites, including all the historic features, will remain within the reconfigured park. Two archaeological sites that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be within the reconfigured SRA, and a third was removed from the project area. Another site is along an eroding road that is adjacent to the course, but not within the SRA. The golf course alignment proposed in the general plan avoids these tool making sites. None of these sites are associated with important historical events or people or are unique works of a master artist or craftsman, but their potential to yield information about Washoe Indian and other cultures makes them eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The archaeological sites within the reconfigured State Recreation Area's boundaries are not so significant that they would typically warrant protection within a cultural preserve. The Commission and State Parks use preserves to provide special protection for only the most extraordinary archaeological sites and historic buildings, rather than for every resource qualifying for the National Register of Historic Places. Many SRAs hold archaeological sites similar to those here that are outside of a cultural preserve, such as at Folsom State Recreation Area and Tahoe State Recreation Area. The archeological sites' value in contributing to understanding of Washoe and other Indian cultures will instead be protected by mitigation measures described in Section 3.2.2 of the PAAEA (FEIR2 volume 6). These mitigation measures have been approved by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Through ongoing consultation with the Washoe Tribe, the golf course was redesigned to remove the area near ELD-555 from the project site and to avoid the other sites that are within the golf course footprint. This is reflected in the difference in footprint and SRA boundary between the original Alternative 2 in the FEIR and the Proposed Project, Alternative 2B.

These adjustments in the classification of the park and SRA are consistent with the purposes for which the units were established and with the applicable sections of Public Resources Code (PRC). After the land exchange, the most outstanding scenic and natural features of the properties and their significant ecological, scenic, and cultural resources – the wet meadows, pine forests, Angora Creek, most of the Truckee River, archaeological sites and historic buildings – will be protected within the state park and the ecosystems of both the SRA and the park will be managed together to restore, protect, and maintain their natural values, as provided in PRC Sections 5019.53 and 5019.56 (a).

In response to the Washoe tribe's comments on the EIR in 2011, the department will continue to protect the site's outstanding cultural values, consistent with PRC

Section 5019.74, including providing for appropriate access to the site by tribal members and recognizing the tribe's connection to the SRA's landscape, as requested in its comment letter. The resource values of the other archaeological sites in the SRA will be protected effectively with mitigation measures proposed in the EIR. The majority of the significant cultural resources would remain located in WMSP.

B. Recreation Opportunities Are Provided

The reconfigured units and amended general plan provide appropriate recreation opportunities to Lake Tahoe visitors and residents, consistent with the purposes for which the units were established. Roughly 3 million visitors travel to South Lake Tahoe annually. Outdoor recreation is among the primary reasons they select the area as a vacation destination, exceeding gaming, and other man-made attractions. The SRA, with its location along U.S. 50, the major route of travel for visitors to the greater Tahoe Basin, is important to South Lake Tahoe, signaling visitors' arrival at this scenic vacationland.

The affordable public golf provided by the SRA's Lake Tahoe Golf Course is an important contributor to the region's outdoor recreation. Visitors to the SRA enjoy roughly 30,000 rounds of golf annually at the Lake Tahoe Golf Course, with over two thirds of these rounds played by visitors to the region. The existing golf course, featuring 18 regulation length holes, is referred to as a "championship" course. The course is generally fully booked during prime summer hours. Lake Tahoe Golf Course users especially appreciate its convenience, the 18-hole, regulation course, and its scenic beauty, which is enhanced by the SRA's views of the High Sierra and the Upper Truckee River. For some visitors, the hope that golf balls driven in the thin mountain air will travel farther adds a special thrill to golfing at Lake Valley SRA. The course also provides an important setting for local events, including golf tournaments for high school and community college teams, charity fundraisers, family gatherings, weddings, and corporate meetings. The Project will retain a reconfigured golf course that features a par and yardage approximately the same as the existing course, protecting this important recreation opportunity for which the SRA was established.

Affordability is an important attribute of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course. Consistent with its public ownership, green fees are reasonably priced, less than other privately-owned regulation-length courses nearby. Through its concession agreement, California State Parks limits the maximum golf fees at Lake Tahoe Golf Course to \$89 per round, in comparison to up to \$280 per round at Edgewood, the nearest 18-hole regulation course on Lake Tahoe's south shore. In a 2008 survey of Lake Tahoe Golf Course's users undertaken as part of the Project's feasibility studies, about 37 percent of golfers report that price was important in their decision to play golf there. Golfers attending meetings about the Project have commented that they would like continuation of a regulation 18-hole course at an affordable price. Approximately 75% of those surveyed said they would not play the course if it were reduced to 9 holes or an executive course.

State Parks evaluated the economics of alternative ways to provide golf recreation at the SRA (Lake Tahoe Golf Course Economic Feasibility Report, Appendix E in the EIR),

including a golf course with a reduced play area, such as an executive, par-3 course or a nine-hole course. This evaluation found that a golf course with a reduced play area would produce marginal revenues for a concessionaire and so could be susceptible to closure. Because the Tahoe Paradise Golf Course, located about 2 miles from the SRA, already provides a reduced play golf course, developing an executive, par-3 course or a nine-hole course at the SRA would duplicate and compete with this existing recreation opportunity.

In addition to golf, Lake Valley State Recreation Area and Washoe Meadows State Park also provide valued opportunities for other summer and winter recreation. Currently, the park has an informal network of inherited logging and quarry roads adopted as trails by hikers, bicyclists, joggers, and equestrians. The existing golf course bridges over the river, however, are closed to hikers or equestrians due to safety hazards of errant golf balls. A survey of trail users during summer 2006 and 2007 showed that 86 percent of trail users were from neighborhoods surrounding the park.

The Project will continue to improve the park's and SRA's trails. Reconfiguration of the golf course authorized by the adjustment of the units' classification and the general plan amendment will allow room to construct a new section of trail, built to ADA standards, along the restored river that would connect from the parking lot on Hwy 50 and Sawmill Bike Path to a new bridge over the Truckee River. This trail would connect to trails on the west side of the river in Washoe Meadows State Park, increasing access to the park which currently has no formal trailheads. Local residents on the east side of the park and visitors arriving via U.S. 50 would be able to enjoy hiking or riding from the golf course clubhouse, along and across the newly restored river, and north to the park's forests and meadows (Figure 7). In addition, the new golf bridge off of Country Club Drive would be designed to allow for recreation access and connectivity to the park. This will greatly increase the opportunity for visitors to access the park and enhance opportunities for longer distance walking, running, or biking. Neighborhood access from the west side of the park would be nearly identical to exiting conditions, with the exception of one trail that would be re-routed, and proximity of golf to a section of road.

During winter, the new trails will be available for snowshoers and cross country skiers. The existing snowmobile track on the driving range at the SRA may remain.

Anglers and boaters will also be able to recreate on additional sections of the river formerly occupied by the golf course. Fishing would be allowed on approximately 4,200 foot of river that is currently closed due to golf holes on both banks and play across the river. This would be a substantial increase in recreational fishing access for local residents and visitors alike.

The reconfigured golf course, trails, angling, boating, and snow mobile track will provide year round recreation opportunities in accordance with Public Resources Code Sections 5001.8, 5019.53, and 5019.56 (a) and the purposes for which the units were established, and consistent with the General Plan. It fulfills the SRA's purpose by retaining an 18-hole championship course for public enjoyment, balancing the objective of providing optimum recreation and maintaining the highest standard of environmental

protection. It will provide for golf and winter recreation while restoring the natural character and ecological values of the Upper Truckee River, as envisioned when the units were created.

C. The clarity and quality of Lake Tahoe waters will be protected

Lake Tahoe is a pristine jewel of nature. Surrounded on all sides by the majestic Sierra Nevada Mountains, Lake Tahoe is one of the clearest lakes in the world. California's six lakeside state parks and recreation areas drew roughly 300,000 visitors in 2009-10, who came to relax outdoors, photograph the mountain scenery, picnic, hike, camp, and swim in the lake's cobalt waters. Outdoor recreationists also visit Nevada's Lake Tahoe State Park, the U.S. Forest Service's lakeside lands, and local parks. Lake Tahoe enhances visitors' experiences at all of these public lands.

Lake Tahoe is designated as an Outstanding National Resource Water, a special designation under the Clean Water Act. Only two bodies of water have this designation in California: Lake Tahoe and Mono Lake. Forty years ago visitors could see to a depth of over 100 feet. Today, lake visitors can see only to depths of only about 60 feet. Despite intensive efforts to protect and restore the lake, pollution from a variety of sources has continued to degrade its water quality. Chief among these pollutants is runoff carrying fine sediment and associated nutrients.

Among the many interstate agreements to protect the lake is the Interagency Partnership for the Lake Tahoe Ecosystem that California State Parks signed in 1997, pledging to participate in environmental improvements to protect the lake's ecosystem. The Project is an outcome of that interagency partnership and a high priority of the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP project #950). After intensive study, the restoration of the Upper Truckee River has been demonstrated to be the most effective approach to achieve the primary water quality purpose of the Project, i.e., to restore the river's natural processes and to reduce the river's contribution of fine suspended sediment to Lake Tahoe. Fine sediment deposition will also be improved by the restoration of the river's floodplain. The reconfigured golf course will be designed to modern standards incorporating best management practices to reduce impacts to water quality and improve irrigation efficiency.

D. The general plan amendment ensures that the reconfigured golf course will be located on land capable of withstanding its impact, and that significant resources are protected, including fens

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) uses a comprehensive system to assess whether a project will affect lands incapable of withstanding its impacts. The Project complies with TRPA's standards, reducing land coverage by the golf in the most sensitive area, the Stream Environment Zone. Because native vegetation zones and protection of larger trees are incorporated between holes to make best use of the topography and provide buffer areas for infiltration, the golf course's overall footprint will increase by 3 acres, from 134 acres to 137 acres. However, the area of fertilized and irrigated nonnative grass will decrease by about 16 acres (8 percent), from 98 acres to

approximately 82 acres. The area of golf course within the sensitive stream environment zone identified by the TRPA would be reduced 26 acres (20 percent), from 128 acres to 102 acres. To allow for connectivity of the golf course, two short holes would be located where the golf course crosses the river's stream environment zone. The golf course design will minimize disturbance, keeping existing topography in mind and placing wider turf areas only in main landing zones, with narrower turf areas near tees. All turf areas would be buffered using native grasses and shrubs. The existing golf holes would be modified to match this style. Golf course holes remaining on the east side of the river would be reconfigured and upgraded to improve drainage, turf quality, irrigation efficiency, and the water collection system and to incorporate current best management practice (BMP) technology.

Special care has been taken to protect a fen located west of the reconfigured golf course. The fen and related vegetation were mapped in 2008, during preparation of a vegetation map for the units. This area is on the hillside above a cut slope of the quarry and the proposed golf course (Figures 8 and 9). The fen area was avoided in order to protect this resource when the study area for the Project was selected. In 2010 and 2011 the fen was mapped again by the California Native Plant Society to verify that it is outside of and upslope of the Project and ground water monitoring data show that the water table is deep below the proposed golf area. A partially subsurface drainage that flows northwest out of the fen is also outside of the project area. That drainage feeds a vernal pool formed in a depression at the base of the quarried hillside downhill of the fen. A berm with a buffer of natural vegetation will be retained between the golf course and this vernal pool area to prevent impacts. There are no golf course features upslope of the fen. The golf area at the base of the hill is downslope of the vernal pool and will be designed to hydrologically separate the golf course so that no surface water or groundwater alterations to the vernal pool would take place.

As described in Section 3.4 of the draft EIR/EIS/EIS, Mitigation Measure 3.4-8 (Alt. 2) will prevent water quality degradation from golf course operations by including design measures to minimize/prevent irrigation and stormwater that is in contact with managed golf landscaping from interacting with surface water and shallow groundwater in areas around seeps and natural waterways. In the draft PAAAEA, Mitigation Measure 3.5-3A requires that State Parks conduct a wetland delineation and obtain ACOE permits.

As described below, the EIR carefully analyzes the effects of the General Plan Amendment (GPA) and classification adjustment and recommends measures to prevent and mitigate significant impacts. Because of the reduction in land coverage, the reduced intrusion within the stream environment zone, the protection of the fen and other resources, and the addition of other mitigation measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts as described in the EIR, the site will be capable of withstanding the golf course's impact.

E. Lake Tahoe Golf Course provides important economic and financial benefits

Approval of the GPA and classification adjustment will support the Project and will retain the Lake Tahoe Golf Course's economic contribution to the South Lake Tahoe and

Meyers community. An economic study conducted in conjunction with the EIR/EIS/EIS in 2008 (Appendix E of the EIR) shows about \$6 million in visitor spending associated with golf visitors and 168 full and part time jobs at the golf course and in golf-related tourism. The revenues that State Parks receives from the golf course concessionaire exceed the state's operational cost, providing a revenue source that supports other State Park System units in the Lake Tahoe basin and elsewhere. These economic and financial benefits are important considerations in evaluating the feasibility of the Project and its alternatives.

F. Neighborhood Privacy Is Protected

Some residents of adjacent neighborhoods have objected to the placement of golf holes west of the river on land that is currently within the park. Concerns include noise from the golf course and its visibility from the neighborhood. A minimum of 1300 feet separates the golf course from the closest private residential property to the west and a minimum of 800 feet separates the golf course from the closest residential property to the south. The southwest-most holes closest to the neighborhood in Alternative 2 were removed from the project in Alternative 2B.

Access to WMSP and the river will be slightly changed, routing trails from the neighborhood to the north and south of the proposed golf area and then tying back in with trails east of the course that access the river. The proposed trails will have improved connectivity with regional trails and the surrounding communities.

IX. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The General Plan Amendment is a project for the purposes of the CEQA. State Parks is the lead agency for the preparation and certification of the Final EIR, as part of a joint Final EIR/EIS/EIS satisfying CEQA, NEPA, and TRPA Compact, ordinances, and rules. The US Bureau of Reclamation is the NEPA lead agency and TRPA is the lead agency for its procedures. The State Park and Recreation Commission is a responsible agency for purposes of the General Plan Amendment. The EIR is considered a project EIR with a comprehensive analysis of environmental impacts of the Project. The analysis is based on a concept-level plan for the Project. While variations in the details regarding the Project layout and facilities should be expected, which is normal as further design development continues, the impact analysis is intended to capture the environmental effects of those potential design refinements.

Table 4.1-1 in the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS summarized the environmental impacts of the Project and GPA, including all the evaluated alternatives. Several beneficial environmental effects have been identified in the EIR for the proposed Preferred Alternative (which is a variation of Alternative 2 presented in the table with the same or lesser impacts). Beneficial impacts include: natural hydrologic processes (such as overbanking), groundwater levels, reduced erosion, water quality benefits from reduced fine sediments, fish and stream aquatic habitat, Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) restoration, and riparian habitat restoration.

No “Potentially Significant” Impacts were identified in Table 4.1-1 for the Land Use, Recreation, Noise, or Population and Housing. The General Plan was discussed in the Land Use section, including changes to the boundaries for LVSRA and WMSP to accommodate reconfiguration of the Golf Course. The Project carries out the primary direction of the current Lake Valley General Plan by allowing for restoration of the river and maintenance of an 18 hole golf course and the impact would be less than significant. In the recreation chapter, under "reduction in recreation opportunities", it was acknowledged that there would be short-term disruption during construction, and that some existing non-system trails would be removed. However, the project will construct new trails, increase connectivity of the trails, provide connectivity of trails to highway 50, including an ADA trail along the river and a new bridge, and increase river-related recreation access and opportunities, thus the impact would be less than significant.

As also noted in Table 4.1-1, the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS identified impacts of the Project that have the potential to be “significant” impacts, but are mitigated to a less-than-significant level through recommended mitigation, where feasible. Potentially significant impacts that are mitigated to less than significance include: On-site storm water runoff, 100-year flood hazard, site-specific erosion risks, risk of damage to an adjacent sewer line, coarse sediment transport, water quality contamination from golf course operations, short-term habitat degradation and disturbance during period of construction and initial channel response, potential effects to special-status plants, tree removal, introduction of invasive species, short-term wildlife disturbance, potential disturbance of cultural resources, seismic shaking, visual character, recreation construction truck damage to local streets, mosquito health hazards, construction traffic conflicts, temporary disruption of access to utilities, short-term construction air emissions, and risk of hazardous materials release during construction.

Four potentially significant environmental effects have been recognized as significant and unavoidable as discussed in the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations document, attached and hereby incorporated by reference:

- Hydrology and Water Quality - Short-Term Risk of Surface Water or Groundwater Degradation during Construction
- Hydrology and Water Quality - Short-Term Risk of Surface Water or Groundwater Degradation Following Construction
- Cumulative Geomorphology and Water Quality – Short-Term Risk of Surface Water or Groundwater Degradation during Construction
- Cumulative Geomorphology and Water Quality – Short-Term Risk of Surface Water or Groundwater Degradation Following Construction

These impacts require that the Commission, when adjusting the units’ classification and approving general plan amendment, adopt findings and a statement of overriding

considerations for significant, unavoidable impacts, which is contained in the resolutions.

X. FISCAL IMPACTS

The Lake Tahoe Golf Course generates annual revenues to State Parks through the golf course concession. The average rent to State Parks over the past 5 year has been \$606,500 plus an additional \$121,000 in capital improvements (CIP) per year. The rounds played and revenues have been steadily increasing, with a preliminary total of 31,400 rounds, and \$892,000 return to State Parks including CIP for the 2018 season. Approval of the General Plan Amendment and Classification Adjustments will support implementation of the proposed Preferred Alternative, which would retain these fiscally beneficial revenues. Funds for river restoration, which is estimated to cost about \$5 million, are likely to be secured through grants. Golf course reconfiguration would likely result from negotiation of a new concession agreement for the Lake Tahoe Golf Course, and would likely be about \$2.5 million. If the reconfiguration was fully paid by a concessionaire, revenue to State Parks would likely be reduced for several years.

XI. FIGURES & ATTACHMENTS

Figure 1 - Location Map

Figure 2 - Vicinity Map

Figure 3 - 1987 google earth phot showing previous disturbance

Figure 4 - Existing Unit Boundaries

Figure 5 - Adjusted Unit Boundaries

Figure 6 - Comparison of distance of golf features to river existing vs. proposed

Figure 7 - Recreation Map

Figure 8 - Cross section showing relationship of fen to golf course

Figure 9 - Map of Fen in relationship to golf course

Attachment A - Lake Valley State Recreation Area General Plan Amendment & Classification Adjustment and Washoe Meadows State Park Classification Adjustment

XII. LITERATURE CITED IN THIS REPORT

Department of Parks and Recreation, 1987 *Lake Country Estates Resource Summary*

Department of Parks and Recreation, 1988 *Lake Valley State Recreation Area General Plan*

Department of Parks and Recreation, 2009 *Survey of Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California*

Lake Tahoe Visitor's Authority, 2008 *Economic Impact Analysis of Tourism on the Lake Tahoe Region*

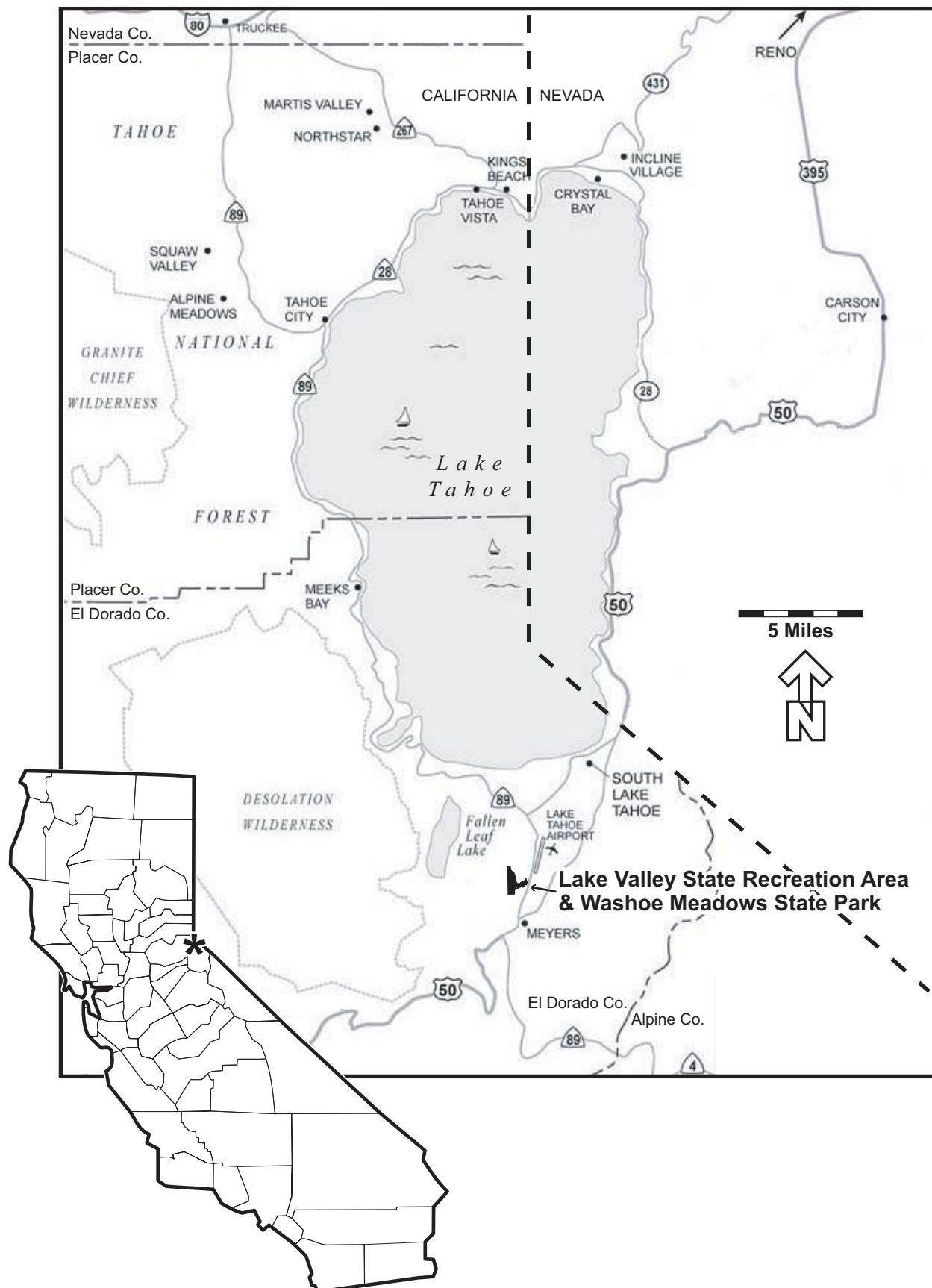
River Run Consulting, 2006 *Upper Truckee River Restoration Project Riparian Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Report*

Strategic Marketing Group, 2010 *Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority 2010 South Shore Intercept Survey*

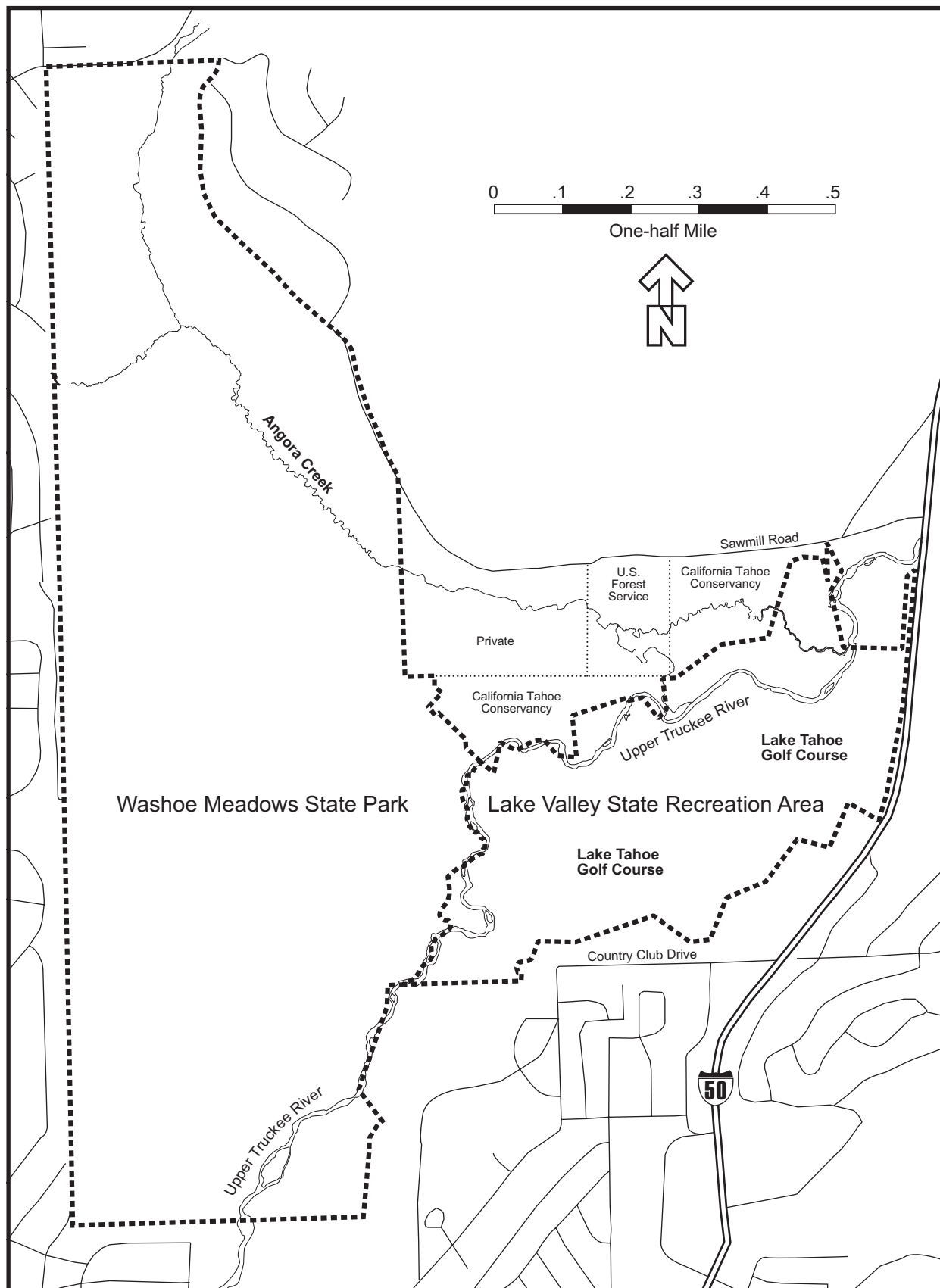
Swanson Hydrology and Geomorphology, 2003 *Upper Truckee River Upper Reach Environmental Assessment Report*

USDA Agricultural Research Service, National Sedimentation Laboratory, A. Simon and others, 2003 *Lake Tahoe Basin Framework Study: Sediment Loadings and Channel Erosion*

Figure 1: Location - Lake Valley State Recreation Area & Washoe Meadows State Park



**Figure 2: Vicinity Map - Lake Valley State Recreation Area
and Washoe Meadows State Park**



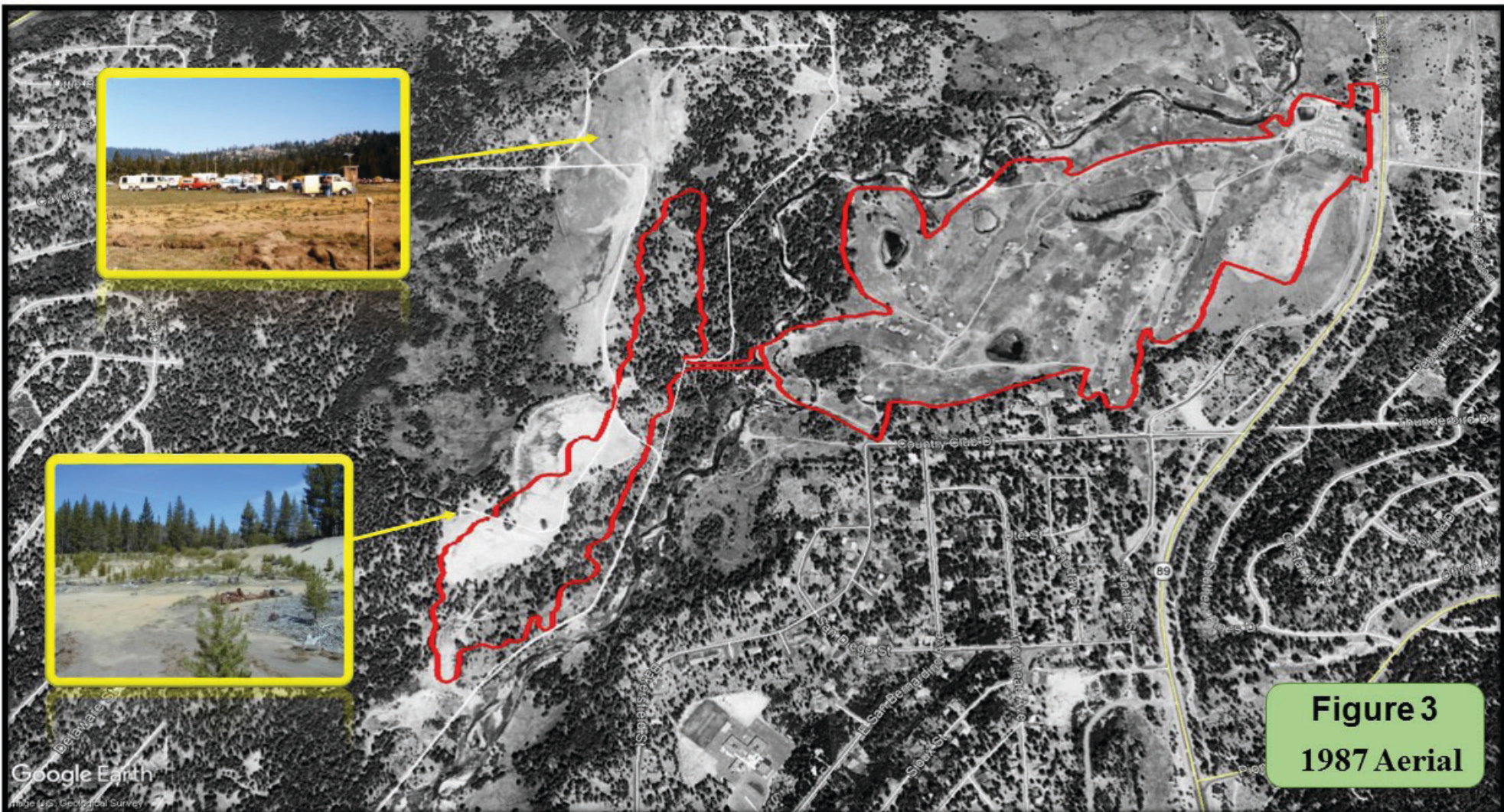
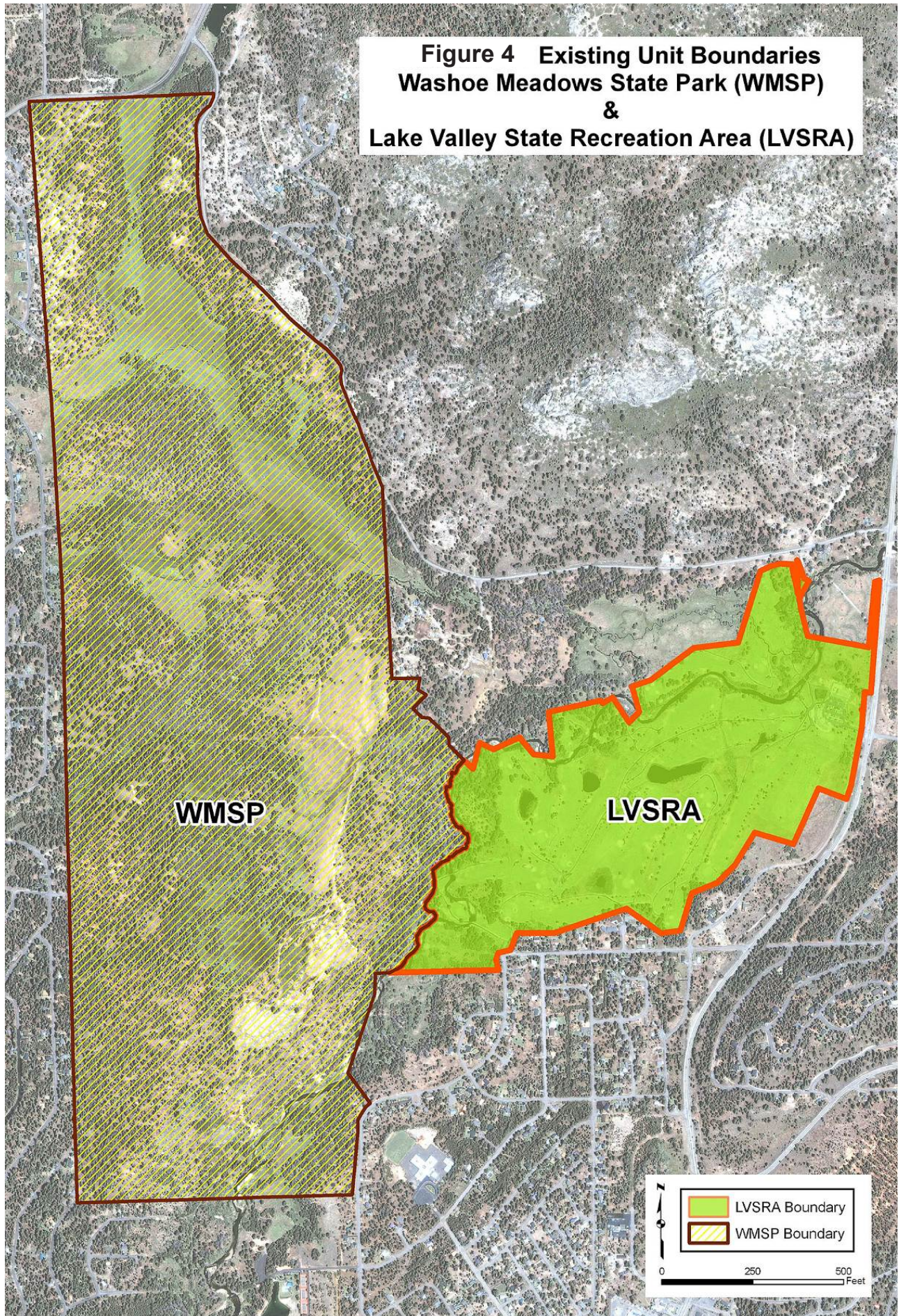


Figure 3
1987 Aerial

**Figure 4 Existing Unit Boundaries
Washoe Meadows State Park (WMSP)
&
Lake Valley State Recreation Area (LVSRA)**



**Figure 5 Adjusted Unit Boundaries
Washoe Meadows State Park (WMSP)
&
Lake Valley State Recreation Area (LVSRA)
Unit Boundaries After Adjustment**

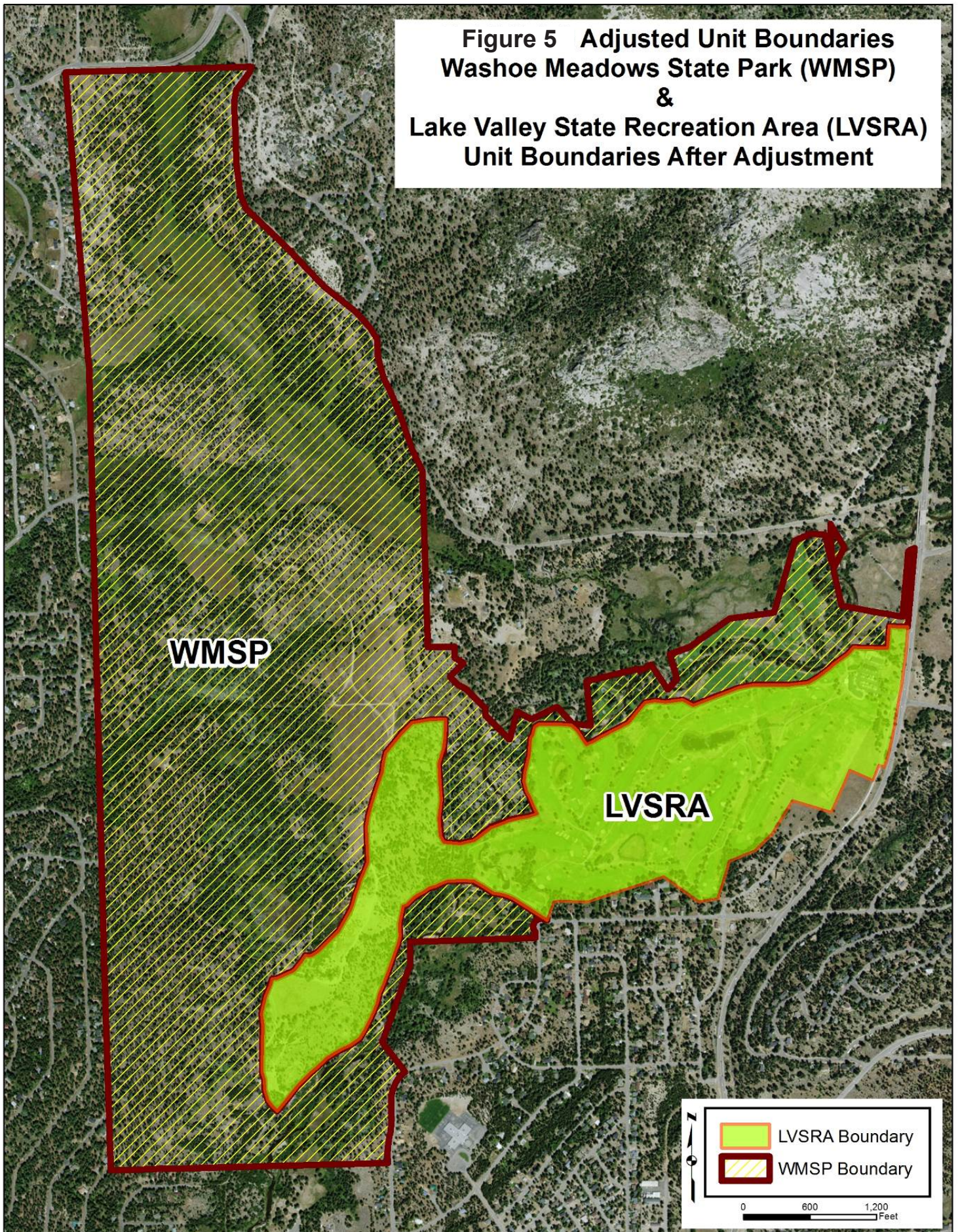


Figure 6 Comparison of Golf Course Adjacent to the River

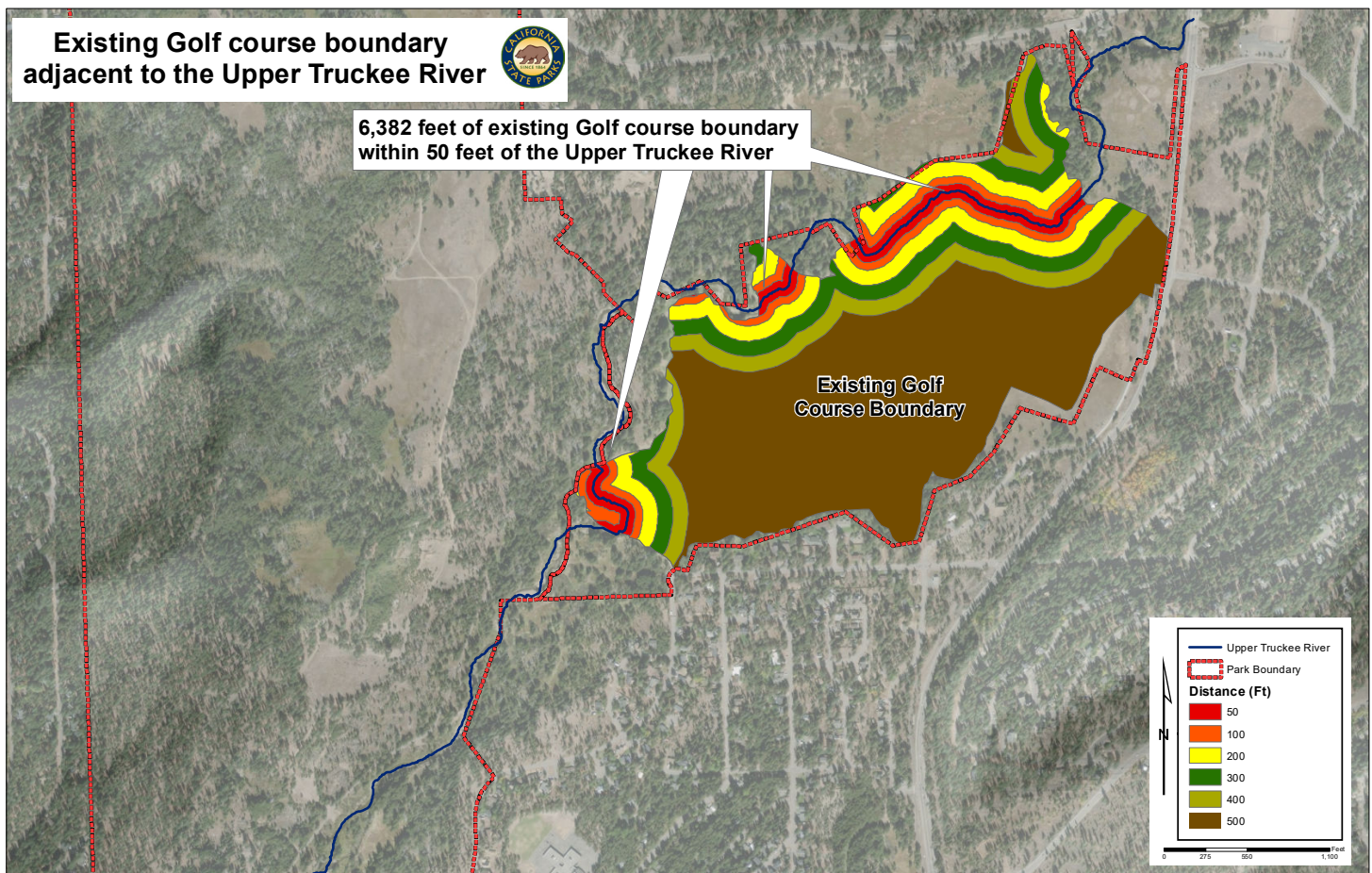
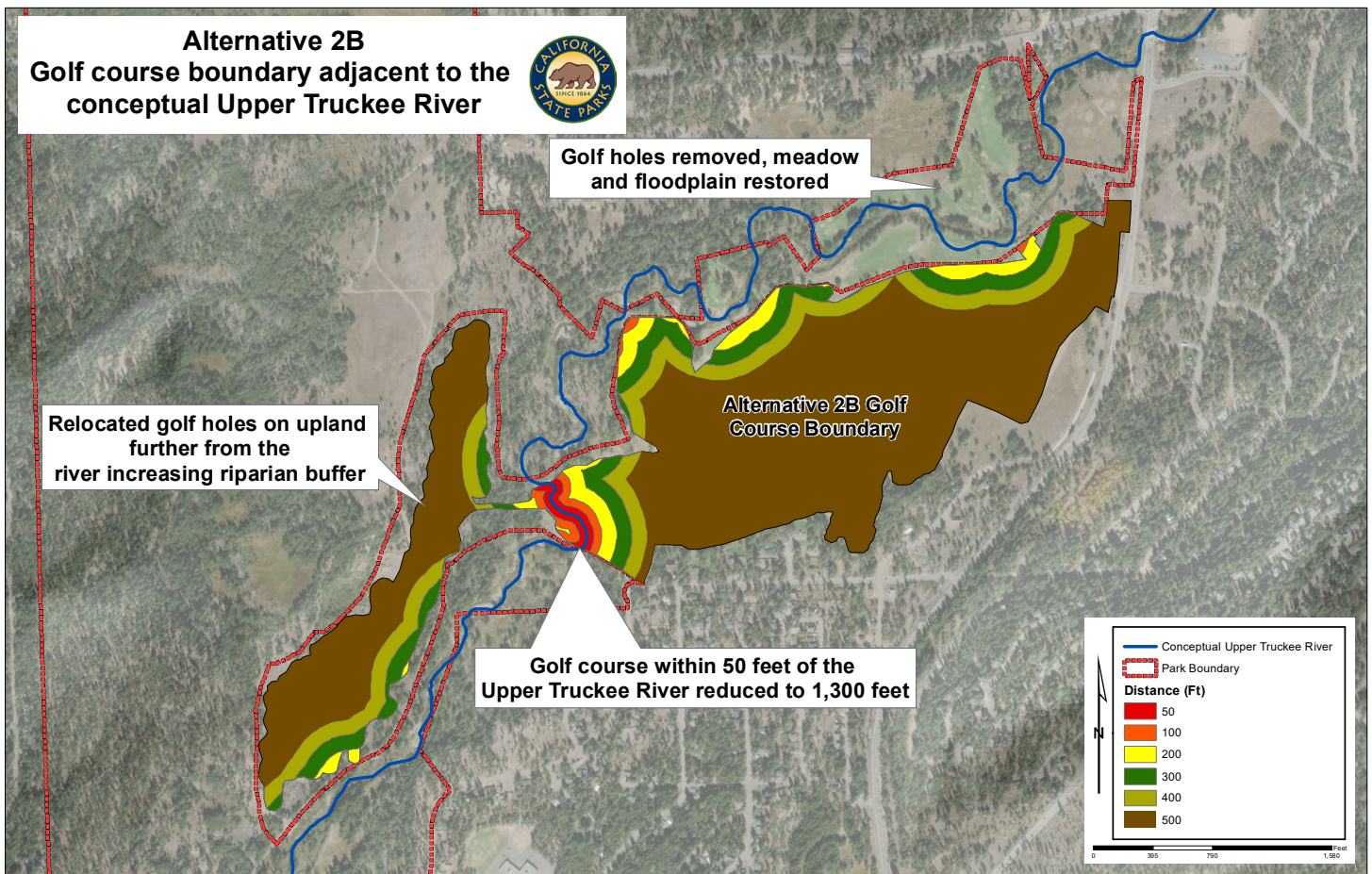
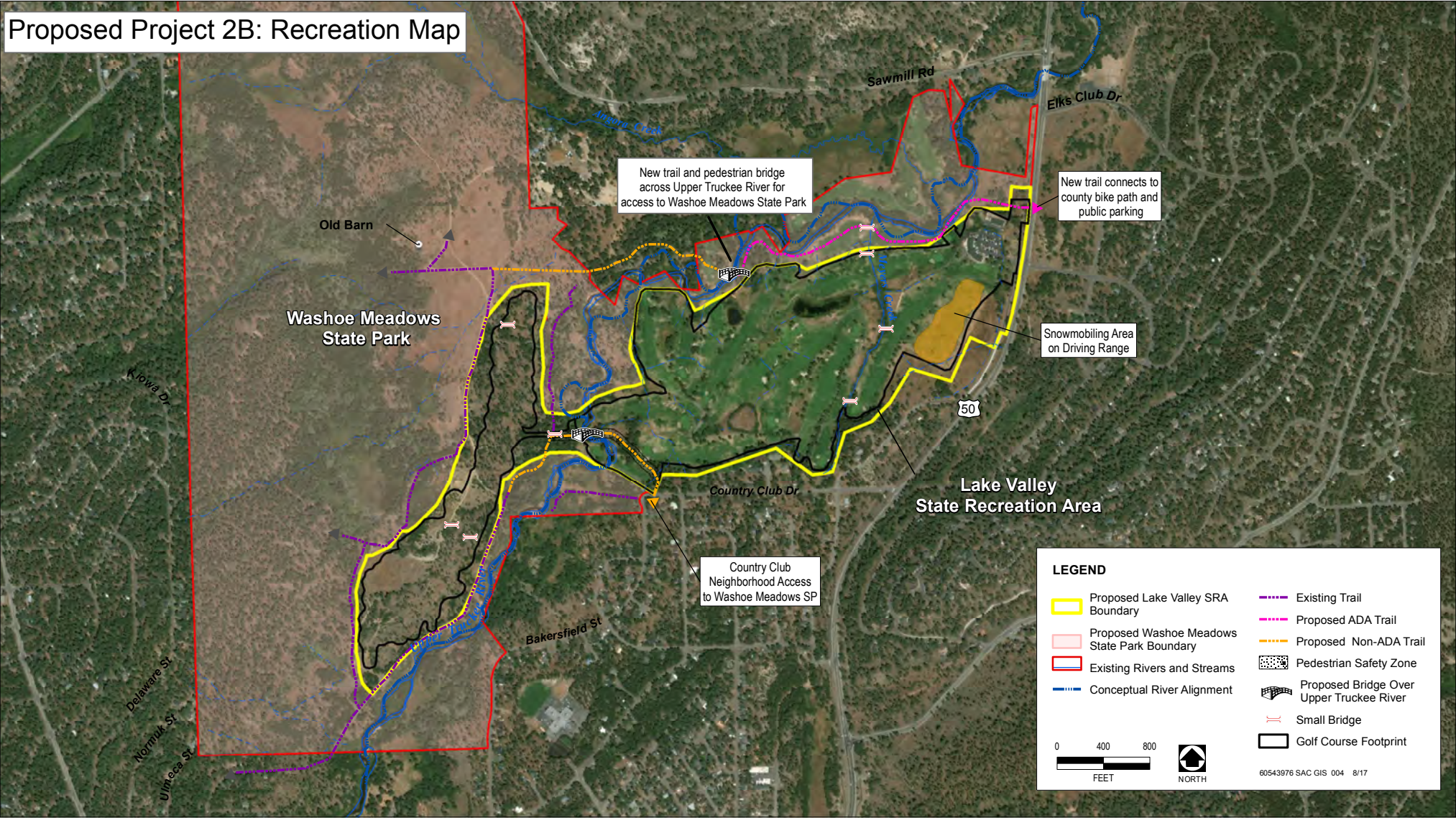


Figure 7



Source: California State Parks 2011 & 2017

Revised Recreation

Figure 8 – Relationship of Fen to Proposed Golf Course

(Golf is proposed on lower slope (arrows) where groundwater is 5 to 10 feet deep)

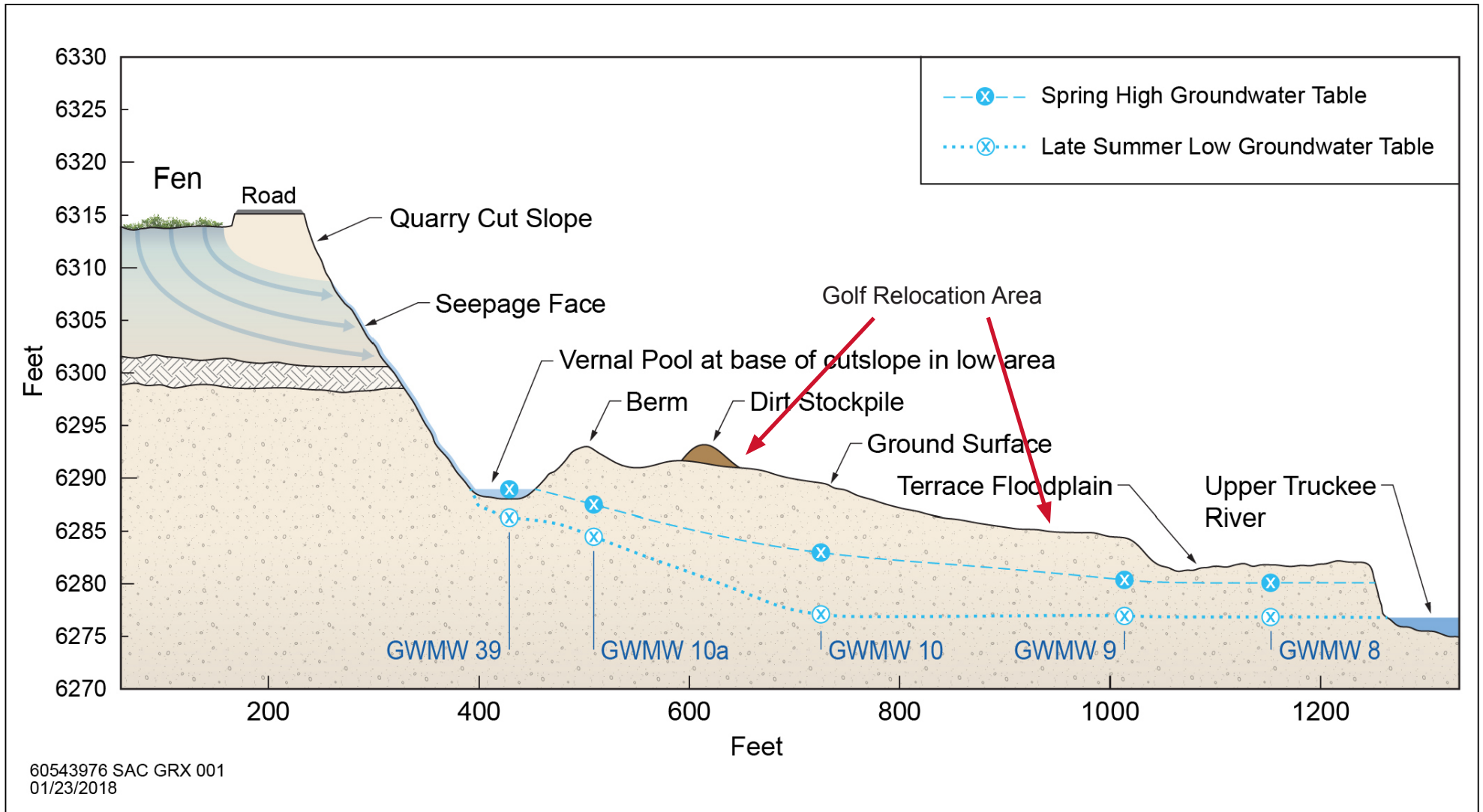
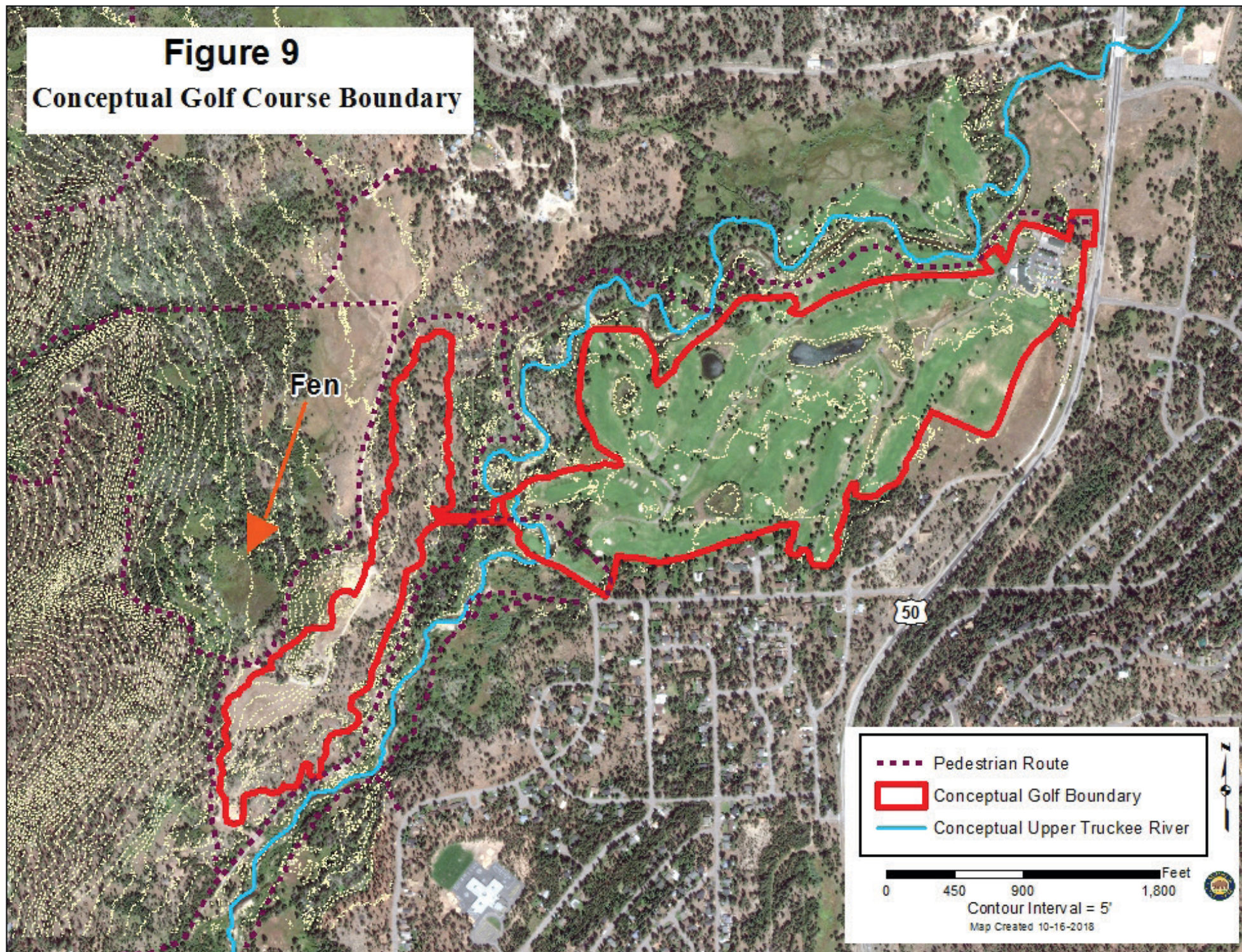


Figure 9
Conceptual Golf Course Boundary



APPENDIX A

Lake Valley State Recreation Area
General Plan Amendment and Classification Adjustment and
Washoe Meadows State Park Classification Adjustment

APPENDIX A

LAKE VALLEY STATE RECREATION AREA GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND CLASSIFICATION ADJUSTMENT AND WASHOE MEADOWS STATE PARK CLASSIFICATION ADJUSTMENT

For the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to implement the proposed project (Preferred Alternative 2B) for the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project, three actions by the California Park and Recreation Commission (SPRC) are necessary:

1. Certify the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project's environmental documentation as being adequate under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
2. Adjust the classification of certain areas within Washoe Meadows State Park (SP) and Lake Valley State Recreation Area (SRA) by modifying the boundary of the two units.
3. Amend the general plan for Lake Valley SRA.

The project's environmental impact report/environmental impact statement/environmental impact statement (EIR/EIS/EIS) contains a comprehensive evaluation of a reasonable range of alternatives, including a No-Project/No-Action Alternative and four action alternatives. A refined version of Alternatives 2 and 2A is proposed by State Parks as the Preferred Alternative or proposed project, hereafter referred to as Preferred Alternative 2B, because it best meets the project's basic objectives among the evaluated alternatives. The Preferred Alternative 2B and Additional Environmental Analysis (PAAEA) contains a complete description of Preferred Alternative 2B, the proposed project.

The summary descriptions of the relevant components of the proposed project (Preferred Alternative 2B), the amendment of the Lake Valley SRA General Plan, and the classification adjustments for certain lands within both Lake Valley SRA and Washoe Meadows SP that are required as part of the project's implementation are presented below.

BACKGROUND OF LAKE VALLEY STATE RECREATION AREA

The lands that contain Lake Valley SRA and Washoe Meadows SP were originally purchased as one parcel and then subdivided to allow for continued operation of the golf course. The general plan for Lake Valley SRA was prepared in 1988 and states that "the land acquisition process that resulted in the establishment and classification of Lake Valley SRA began with the acquisition of the Lake Country Estates project by the Wildlife Conservation Board in 1985. ... This purchase was a result of litigation entitled *Lake Country Estates, Inc, et al., v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, et al.* A provision of that statute requires that 'the property shall be operated and maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation in a manner which promotes its environmental and recreational values.' ... Golf course operation and winter sports activities previously provided for under

state-administered contracts are proposed to be continued in kind pursuant to the Declaration of Purpose adopted by the California Park and Recreation Commission on March 13, 1987.”

The purpose of Lake Valley SRA is: “To make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the 18-hole golf course, and the scenic Upper Truckee River and its environs. The department shall balance the objectives of providing optimum recreational opportunities and maintaining the highest standards of environmental protection. In so doing, the department shall define and execute a program of management within the unit that shall perpetuate the unit’s declared values, providing for golfing along with other compatible summer and winter recreation opportunities while restoring the natural character and ecological values of the upper Truckee River, protecting its water quality, and protecting and interpreting significant natural, cultural, and scientific values.”

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF RELEVANT COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 2B)

The proposed project (Preferred Alternative 2B) includes a reconfiguration of the existing Lake Tahoe Golf Course at Lake Valley SRA to remove five existing golf course holes located within the active floodplain–stream environment zone (SEZ) and the historic meander belt of the Upper Truckee River and relocate them to less environmentally sensitive land on the west side of the river. Removing the golf course holes from the river corridor will allow room for the river restoration actions and create a buffer between the river and the golf course. This reach of the river has been identified as one of the largest stream sediment producers contributing to degradation of Lake Tahoe’s water clarity, and as a restoration priority in the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Environmental Improvement Program.

The proposed project will result in the river regaining important natural geomorphic processes, such as occupying a wider meander belt, reconnecting with the adjacent floodplain, and overbanking into the active floodplain more frequently. This will, in turn, enhance critical riparian habitat and improve water quality in both the river and Lake Tahoe. While the overall footprint of the golf course will increase slightly to allow for optimal use of existing topography, the proposed land exchange between Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA is almost equal, with Washoe Meadows SP increasing by approximately 2 acres.

This alternative will provide a separate bridge for non-golf recreation use with the same ecosystem restoration approach as considered for Alternatives 2 and 2A. The proposed project will relocate fewer holes to the west side of the river, resulting in retention of more existing holes on the east side. To provide an adequate buffer for the retained holes near River Mile (RM) 6000, the river restoration will incorporate an additional historic meander to the north instead of retaining the existing channel in that reach. Most of the relocated golf facilities will be within higher capability lands (mostly away from the river and outside of SEZ) and the area of nonnative golf course turf will decrease, while turf management will be improved with irrigation upgrades and more naturalized areas.

The proposed project (Preferred Alternative 2B) will allow the continuation of an 18-hole regulation golf course called for in the Lake Valley SRA General Plan and is consistent with the purpose for which Lake Valley SRA was established: “Lake Valley SRA was established to make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the 18-hole golf course and the scenic Upper Truckee River and its environs.” The General Plan also called for preparation of a plan to “restore a more natural channel configuration, to control unnatural bank erosion rates, and to restore riparian habitat along the Upper Truckee River through the unit.” The proposed project will

meet geomorphic, ecological, recreational, operational, and revenue criteria, and continue to provide golf recreation and public access for dispersed recreation. The proposed project will meet geomorphic, ecological, recreational, operational, and revenue criteria, and will continue to provide golf recreation and improve public access for dispersed recreation,

The proposed project also has economic benefits. It maintains the economic benefits to the local and regional economy, including the maintenance of golf course jobs and the beneficial multiplier effect of spending by golfers (e.g., food, lodging), which benefits businesses and provides jobs in the community. Lake Tahoe Golf Course provides an affordable golf experience in the region, with prices limited by State Parks. The availability of affordable golf contributes to Tahoe's competitiveness as a vacation destination, complementing its other recreation attractions. It also maintains the revenue the State of California receives from the golf course concession at an amount similar to the existing level.

The proposed project exemplifies a project that is consistent with State Parks' Mission: to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. Restoring the Upper Truckee River will help preserve biological diversity and protect natural resources. The reconfigured golf course will retain and improve high-quality, reasonably priced, golf recreation opportunities within the state recreation area while protecting cultural and natural resources on the project site.

Reconfiguration of the golf course away from the river allows room for river restoration, including increasing the river's channel length, expanding the functioning floodplain, increasing riparian habitat and corridor connectivity, and other river ecosystem restoration actions. The current 11,840-foot-long reach of the Upper Truckee River will be restored to 13,730 feet with at least 20 acres of additional functional floodplain area. Five golf course holes will be relocated to an area on the west side of the river that contains less sensitive land and is farther from the river. This will also reduce the amount of SEZ occupied by the golf course (see Exhibits 2-1 and 2-2 in the PAAEA). The golf course footprint will increase slightly compared to existing conditions, by approximately 3 acres; however, this increase will occur in naturalized and minimally managed areas within the footprint, whereas the acreage of turf areas (fairways, tees, greens, rough) will decrease from existing conditions.

All five existing bridges will be removed from the Upper Truckee River and two new, longer bridges will be constructed. Four bridges will also be removed from Angora Creek. A second recreation access bridge will cross the Upper Truckee River downstream, near the current hole 12 bridge (north of RM 5000). This bridge will provide connectivity from the proposed trail at U.S. Highway 50 (U.S. 50) to Washoe Meadows SP. The trails and golf holes will be designed with buffer areas between golf play and the path. Based on the preliminary design of the proposed project (Preferred Alternative 2B), the amount of golf course adjacent to (within 50 feet of) the Upper Truckee River will decrease from 6,382 linear feet to 1,300 linear feet. An additional length of golf course will run parallel to the river, but will generally be outside the active floodplain, reduce the golf course area in SEZ, and be more distant from the river. Adjoining riparian vegetation communities will be restored, improving habitat connectivity and increasing the extent of the vegetative buffer, which will provide treatment areas for protection of water quality from golf course and urban land use. Treatments are also planned along the lower portion of Angora Creek and the unnamed creek to enhance those channels and adjust the confluence with the Upper Truckee River.

The overall plan is preliminary and the final design and acreages may be refined during the normal detailed design process to satisfy parties involved in the final decision-making process. These refinements will be within the environmental document’s study area and will not substantially increase the severity of any significant impact already identified nor create a new significant impact.

CLASSIFICATION ADJUSTMENT

The purpose statement for Lake Valley SRA is as follows:

The purpose of Lake Valley State Recreation Area is to make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the 18-hole golf course, and the scenic Upper Truckee River and its environs.

The department shall balance the objectives of providing optimum recreational opportunities and maintaining the highest standards of environmental protection. In so doing, the department shall define and execute a program of management within the unit that shall perpetuate the unit's declared values, providing for golfing along with other compatible summer and winter recreation opportunities while restoring the natural character and ecological values of the upper Truckee River, protecting its water quality, and protecting and interpreting significant natural, cultural, and scientific values.

The current boundary of Lake Valley SRA (Exhibit A-1) was originally drawn to encompass the then-existing golf course. The remainder of the state land was placed in Washoe Meadows SP. The proposed classification adjustment continues this approach of containing the reconfigured golf course entirely in the state recreation area and implementing the purpose of that unit.

The classification of lands at the project site will be adjusted so that Lake Valley SRA will encompass the reconfigured golf course, including the golf holes relocated to the west side of the river, and Washoe Meadows SP will contain most of the restored river corridor. The classification adjustment results in an exchange of land between the two units. The net change in acreage of the units after the classification adjustments is approximately 2 acres, as shown in Table A-1 and Exhibits A-2 and A-3.

Table A-1. Summary of Acreage Changes with Classification Adjustments			
Park Unit	Existing	Preferred Alternative	Net Change
Lake Valley State Recreation Area	173	171	- 2
Washoe Meadows State Park	608	610	+ 2

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

The Lake Valley SRA General Plan recognizes the importance of both the golf course as a recreational opportunity and the need to restore the Upper Truckee River and its environs. As noted on page 34 of the general plan, it is uncommon for a golf course to be the primary feature within a unit of the State Park System. However, its classification as a state recreation area recognizes the significance of perpetuating the quality public golfing

opportunity in the Tahoe Basin. The Declaration of Purpose is as follows: “The purpose of the Lake Valley SRA is to make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the 18-hole golf course, and the scenic Upper Truckee River and its environs.”

On pages 35–38 of the Lake Valley SRA General Plan, the natural values of the river are discussed with recognition of the need to restore a balance in its natural geomorphic processes, including restoration of a natural channel configuration and riparian habitat. On pages 59–60, it is recommended that the existing golf course (18 holes, 6,700 yards) and winter recreational opportunities be continued. Amending the Lake Valley SRA General Plan to reflect the proposed classification adjustment and boundary modification will be consistent with maintaining the significance of golf recreation opportunity and appropriate management of the river’s natural resources. The amendment is a necessary action for implementing the proposed project (Preferred Alternative 2B), which is most consistent (among the other considered project alternatives) with both the river management and golf recreation opportunity provisions of the Lake Valley SRA General Plan and addresses the public’s concerns regarding Alternative 2.

The Lake Valley SRA General Plan is amended to reflect the adjusted classification of land within the unit as implemented through a boundary modification. Otherwise, the purpose of the unit, objectives of the plan, and plan elements (Resource, Interpretive, Concession, Operations, Land Use, and Facilities) are not modified. The classification adjustment is consistent with the unit’s purpose and objectives.

Exhibit A-1 presents an updated Lake Valley SRA General Plan vicinity map with the adjusted boundaries. Exhibit A-2 shows the existing park unit boundaries. Exhibit A-3 shows the adjusted classifications of the land in the park units, essentially “exchanging” land between Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA, and realigning the boundaries between the two park units.

The adjusted classification boundary of Lake Valley SRA contains the reconfigured golf course layout consistent with the purpose and objectives of the Lake Valley SRA General Plan. The new, shared golf/dispersed recreation trail bridge across the Upper Truckee River and immediately adjacent land is included in Lake Valley SRA. The section of river remaining in Lake Valley SRA in the vicinity of the new bridge allows room for defining the precise bridge alignment during the final design.

The adjusted classification boundary of Washoe Meadows SP contains most of the restored river corridor, except in the vicinity of one of the new Upper Truckee River bridges. The area north of the river near Angora Creek and the adjacent area are changed from Lake Valley SRA to Washoe Meadows SP, as is much of the area adjacent to the river on the south. These areas that are currently golf course turf will be restored to native meadow vegetation. The northern section of Washoe Meadows SP that contains the rest of the wet meadow area associated with Angora Creek, as well as the fen area, will continue to be part of Washoe Meadows SP.

The general plan amendment applies to the adjusted classification of land composing Lake Valley SRA and its new boundaries, but does not include any plan elements for Washoe Meadows SP (for which there is not yet an adopted General Plan). The general plan amendment allows for continued operation of an 18-hole championship (regulation) golf course within the SRA, while allowing room for the river restoration and improvements also called for in the Lake Valley SRA General Plan. It also allows for continuation of the winter recreation (snowmobile concession) on the driving range. The relocation of much of the river from Lake Valley SRA into Washoe Meadows SP will allow for greater recreational access to the river by providing space for a regionally

connected trail along the river. Implementation of the proposed project (Preferred Alternative 2B) will not include development of permanent facilities within the adjusted boundaries of Washoe Meadows SP, but dispersed activities such as hiking and cross-country skiing will continue.

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A-1 Vicinity Map with Adjusted Boundaries

Exhibit A-2 Existing Unit Boundaries

Exhibit A-3 Adjusted Unit Boundaries

Exhibit A-1 Vicinity Map

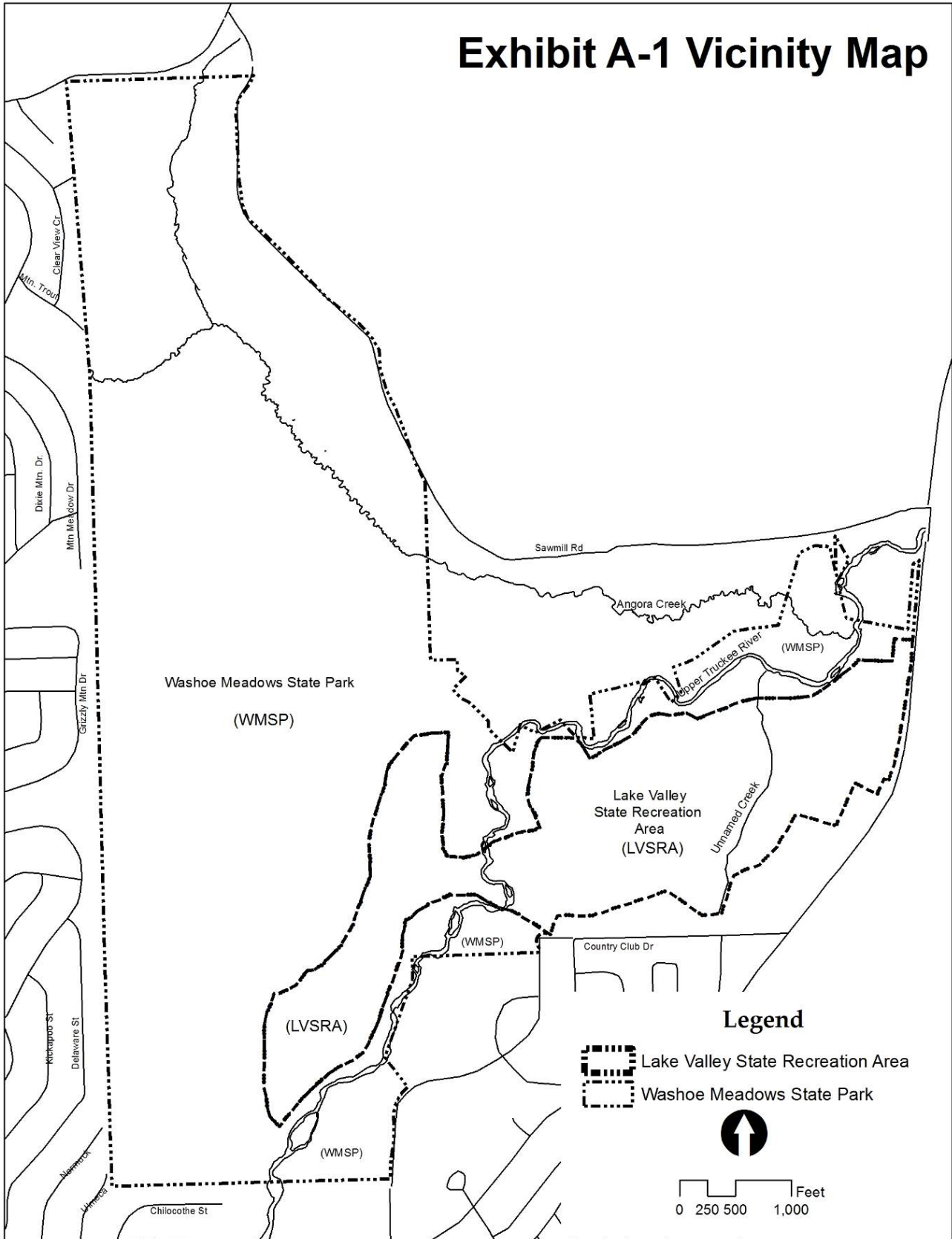


Exhibit A-1 Vicinity Map

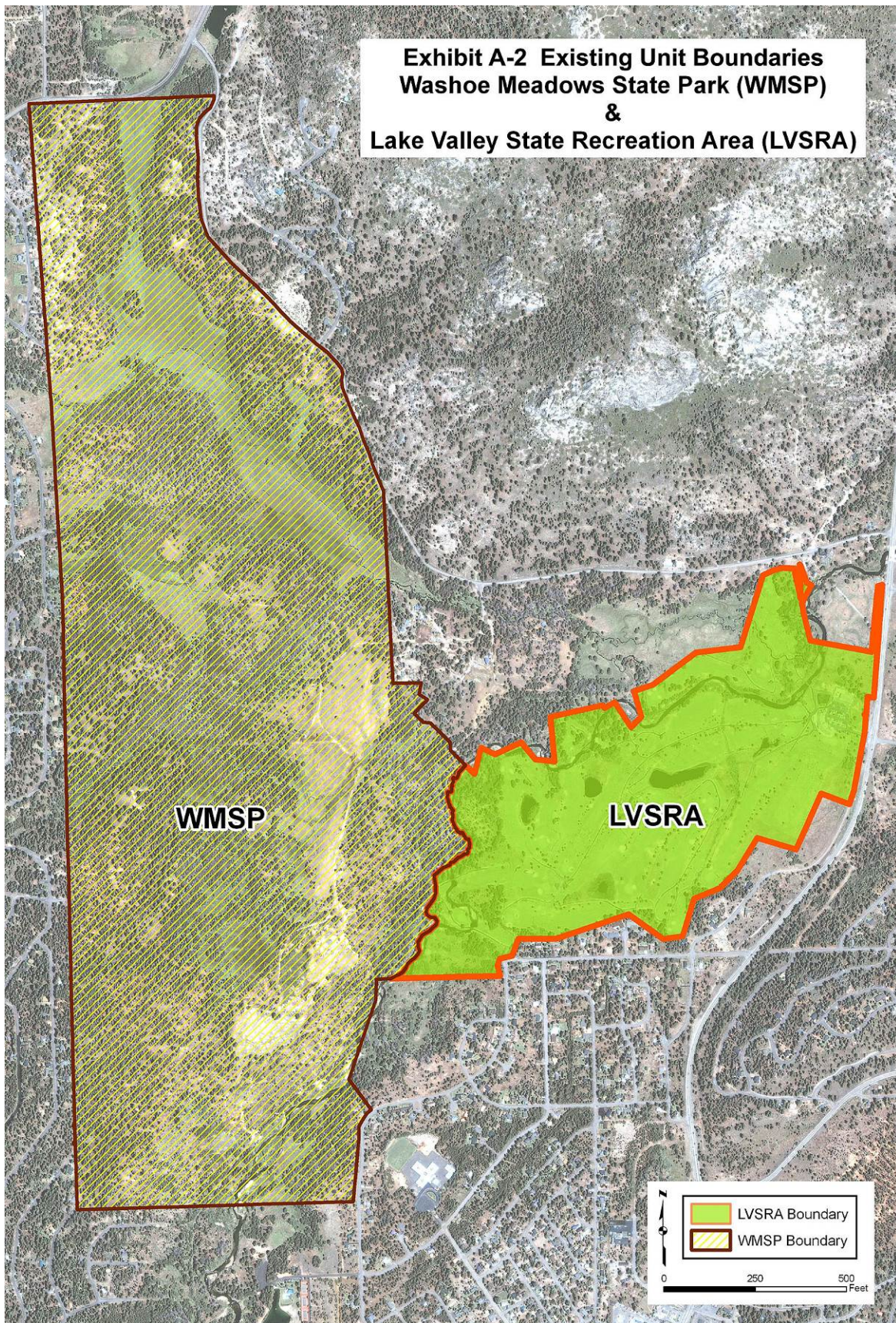


Exhibit A-2 Existing Unit Boundaries

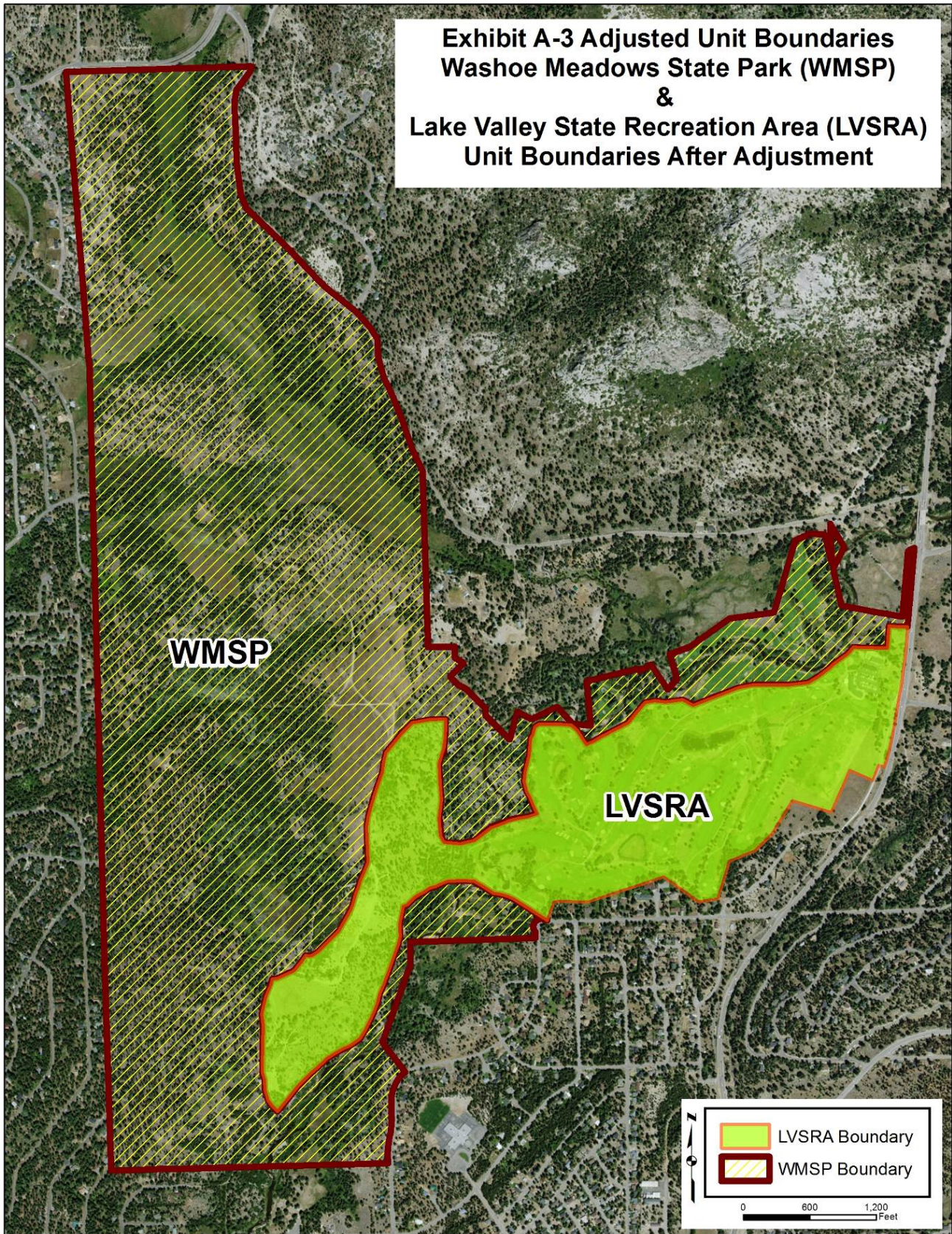


Exhibit A-3 Adjusted Unit Boundaries of the Proposed Project

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